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THE NEW REPUBLIC

July 25, 1981

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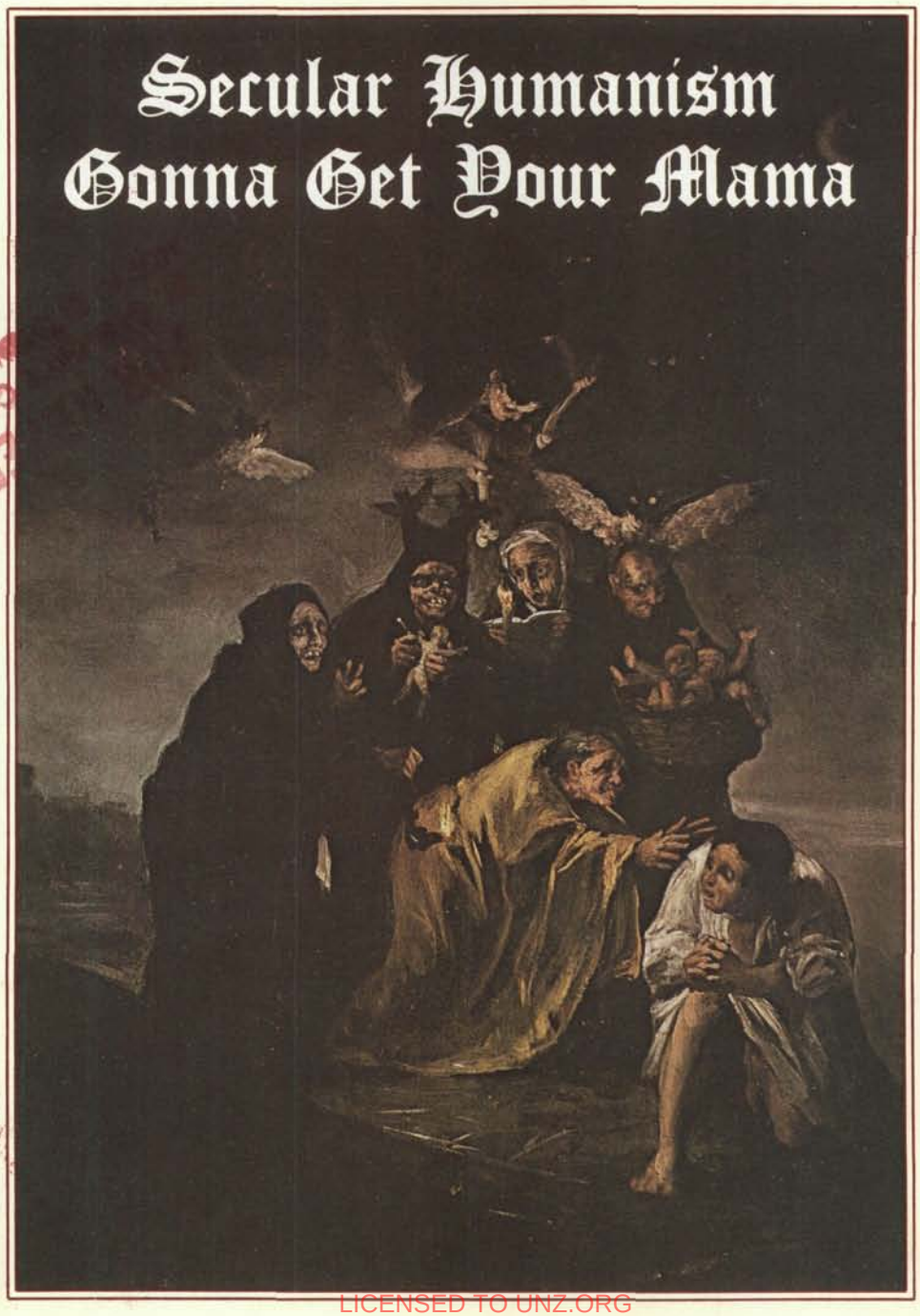

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TRB

from Washington
July 25, 1981

Merger Madness

Louis D. Brandeis was the first Jew appointed to the Supreme Court, and like Sandra O'Connor—the first woman appointed—he had opponents. But they weren't from the crackpot right. Harvard president A. Lawrence Lowell sent the White House an anti-Brandeis petition signed by 51 prominent Bostonians, and former president Taft led another attack from his seat at Yale. Why was Brandeis so feared? There was, to be sure, an element of anti-Semitism. (Associate Justice Reynolds wouldn't sit beside him after Brandeis got confirmed—47 to 22, on June 1, 1916—and reportedly didn't speak to him for three years.) But that wasn't the chief reason. Brandeis feared *bigness*. He didn't like corporate agglutination. He wanted competition. He was anxious about the concentration of more and more industrial power into fewer and fewer hands. He said so with all his force and it sounded anti-American.

Right now the greatest drive in history to concentrate economic power is going on in America. Several factors about this drive are remarkable. The process is going on in the open. It is multinational. It follows the worst corporate bungle since the 1929 Crash—the failure of Detroit, despite repeated warnings of oil shortages by Presidents Nixon, Ford, and Carter, to build smaller European- and Japanese-style models. Also, federal courts recently have authorized corporations to engage in policy advertising in such controversial fields as inflation and energy. And they may institute PAC movements in the political field with big oblique grants of campaign funds. Finally, while all this is going on, the most pro-business president since Calvin Coolidge sits in the White House.

Ronald Reagan is dropping regulation of business wherever he can, and proceeding on the theory that the bigger government gets the more wasteful it gets, while the bigger business gets the more efficient it gets.

Big business and big government are both here to stay and to a large degree they police each other. For example, a former president of the American Political Science Asociation, E. E. Schattschneider, argued that control of "the vast aggregations of wealth" in industry "is a power mobilization of such proportions that it is virtually forced to compete with government." Galbraith has been saying that for years: "The American government works far better—perhaps it only works—when the Federal Executive and influential business and the respectable press are to some degree at odds." But now a whole new dimension has been added. The corporate giant, Du Pont, pursued America's ninth-biggest oil company, Conoco, and tried to achieve the largest merger in America's corporate history. Then a second suitor appeared, Mobil, followed by reports that two others, Texaco, Inc., and the Standard Oil Company of California have romantic intentions of their own. Big corporations seem as intent on mating as Mediterranean fruit flies.

Three years ago the Senate antitrust subcommitfee under Senator Kennedy took testimony on "the greatest merger wave in history." Kennedy found a "trend toward concentrating the control of American industry into fewer and fewer hands." He cited Exxon acquiring J. C. Penny Co., and Mobil taking over Montgomery Ward. In 1978 the total value of conglomerate mergers and acquisitions, he said, was five billion dollars, up from $1.5 billion in five years. At the end of World War II the 200 largest manufacturing firms held 45 percent of US industry, he said, but they increased this to 60 percent "today" (1978). Some 451 major firms controlled 70 percent of all manufacturing assets, he reported, contrasting with only 50 percent in 1960.

That was the score three years ago. Now that the Republicans have taken over the Senate, Kennedy isn't chairman of the subcommittee any longer. But Republican chairman Strom Thurmond wants to know what is going on, too. Hearings are likely soon.

Is the Reagan administration disturbed? Not at all. "Bigness doesn't necessarily mean badness," says Attorney General William French Smith. He says that past antitrust law enforcement has been "misguided and mistaken" and that "efficient firms shouldn't be hobbled." Commerce Secretary Malcolm Baldrige and others consider dropping the seven-year suit against AT&T and the 12-year suit against IBM. Liberals protest. Dropping the landmark suits would send "the wrong message" about the credibility of the antitrust laws, they assert.

It's going to be a different America if the megamergers continue. The biggest corporations are intricately connected by interlocking directorates. They are getting bigger all the time. Three years ago Senator Kennedy found it worthy of note that the value of the conglomerate mergers had reached an astonishing five billion dollars. But the record for 1980 was around $44.3 billion, (swollen, of course, by inflation), and at the pace the first quarter of 1981 is setting, the total will be around $70 billion. Some of these corporations have their own foreign policies; for example, the State Department found that the ITT Corporation was deeply involved in the election in Chile in the 1970s.

The little company is affected by the industrial giants. The latter can outbid, outspend, and outlose a smaller firm. It is like a millionaire poker player who can sit down at a game of unlimited stakes and easily bankrupt his less affluent partners.

A conglomerate merger is multiform. Gulf & Western Industries started as a modest midwestern manufacturing concern with 500 employees; it boasted in a recent annual report that over the past 20 years it had gained control of 100 companies earning four billion dollars. It bought pages in *Time* magazine to boast that it owns Madison Square Garden, grows sugar in the Dominican Republic, produces movies for Paramount Pictures, publishes books under Simon & Schuster, makes cigars, weaves clothing, manufactures pulp, rolls steel, and lends money. That's part of it.

So where do we go from here? Judge Learned Hand summed it up in his famous *Alcoa* decision. Opposition to monopoly, he wrote, is rooted in "the belief that great industrial consolidations are inherently undesirable regardless of their economic results. . . . Among the purposes of Congress in 1890 [the Sherman law] was a desire to put an end to great aggregations of capital because of the helplessness of the individual before them." Do we still feel that way?

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

July 25, 1981

Nice Talk is Not Enough

The administration at long last is getting its international public relations in order. For weeks, President Reagan has been obstinately refusing to make a foreign policy speech, lending credence to charges that he has no foreign policy to speak of. "We know where we are going," he said at one point, "and I think it might be counterproductive to make a speech about it." The president still hasn't made a speech, but Secretary of State Alexander Haig has, to the Foreign Policy Association on July 14, pledging that "with a clear sense of direction and a dedication to the serious objectives of arms control, this administration will strive to make arms control succeed." Haig affirmed that the US will begin negotiating with the Soviet Union late this year on limiting theater nuclear forces in Europe and is preparing for eventual resumption of strategic arms talks.

The obvious target of the Haig speech was Western Europe, where a new outbreak of nuclear paranoia is being whipped along by anti-American propaganda from the Soviet Union, abetted by various European left-wingers. A case in point is Willy Brandt, the very busy chairman of the German Social Democratic party and president of the Socialist International. Brandt visited Brezhnev in early July and came home proclaiming he had important new information on Soviet willingness to talk about theater forces. Brandt also gave a boost to the Soviet proposal for a nuclear weapons-free zone in Northern Europe. Brandt presumably meant well—he is eager to save humanity from destruction—but the effect of his visit was mischievous. It gave credence to the Soviet propaganda line that the Soviet Union is eager for arms reductions while the US is interested only in buildups. In fact, the Soviet Union already has some 250 SS-20 rockets (each with three nuclear warheads) threatening Western Europe while NATO countries still are fussing internally over whether to deploy 464 ground-launched cruise missiles and 108 Pershing II medium-range missiles capable of hitting the Soviets back.

The governments of NATO agreed in December 1979 to deploy these weapons, known collectively as theater nuclear forces, but at the same time the US pledged to open talks with the Soviets on limiting such weapons. The Soviet propaganda drive has been designed to make European populations forget about the threat from the East, concentrate on recalcitrance in the West, and pressure their national leaders to balk at TNF deployment, scheduled for 1985. US reticence about arms control helped the Soviets advance their aims—to the point where one of German chancellor Helmut Schmidt's key associates, Horst Emke, came to Washington to make an urgent plea that Reagan administration officials begin to make it clear that the US is interested in arms talks. According to German officials, had there been no Haig speech last week, Schmidt almost certainly would have pressed the issue with Reagan at the economic summit this week in Ottawa.

There was a Haig speech, though, and it was a good one, setting forth the principles that will guide the administration's approach to arms control—that arms control will be an instrument of, not a replacement for, a coherent security policy; that "linkage" between negotiations and Soviet behavior in other areas is inevitable; that agreements must be verifiable; and that mutual overall security (not necessarily deep cuts in nuclear arsenals) is the US goal in arms talks. Haig took an implicit jab here and there at the Carter administration ("On occasion it has been urged that we accept defective agreements in order to keep the arms control process alive . . . "), but we find nothing in his speech that could not have been uttered by Harold

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Brown, Cyrus Vance, or Paul Warnke. In fact, we believe the Haig principles are basically those which guided the Carter administration in negotiating SALT II, a good treaty which is being observed by both the US and the Soviet Union even though Ronald Reagan condemned it and the US Senate refused to ratify it.

We're encouraged that this administration has decided to talk about its foreign policy goals. But there will still be confusion until the nice talk is followed by real action. It's good news, for example, that on the same day as Haig's speech State's third-ranking official, Walter Stoessel, was telling the House Foreign Affairs Committee that the administration now opposes human rights violations "whether by ally or adversary, friend or foe," and that "ours is not a policy of selective indignation." But that hardly squares with US approval for loans to Chile and Paraguay, or with George Bush's gushy protestations of "love" for the "democratic processes" of Ferdinand Marcos. Europe will be reassured by Haig's arms control speech—but not for long, unless it is followed by real movement toward TNF and SALT negotiations. The administration has found its tongue. What counts now is how it plays its hand.

Summer's here, but winter's coming.

Consolidation in Poland

Warsaw

The Communist party of Poland is using some new methods to conduct its public business, and it would be churlish to deny the significance of what it is doing. But while the world pays rapt attention—and, thereby, a kind of tribute—to the Polish party congress, Poland's young trade union movement, Solidarity, is patiently pursuing its own business. A traveler in Poland at the start of the party congress finds the country's activist workers and farmers less concerned with a reconstruction of the party or the state than simply with getting out from under the leaden hand of Communist government.

At times the political mood here recalls our own: one of indignation against government intrusions, inefficiencies, and injustices. But in Poland, of course, it is a Communist government, something quite different from a welfare state pushed a few notches farther down the political scale. And in Poland, the campaign against government excess is inspired by a trade union spirit, not a chamber of commerce one. To an American eye, all this produces some curious anomalies.

Dr. Andrej Werner, a Polish government economist who deals with Western business interests, proclaims his enthusiasm for Reaganomics—for America, that is. For Poland, he argues passionately against denationalizing industry. Solidarity, he fears, will give management of industry over to the workers, bringing discipline and efficiency to collapse.

Krzysztof Sliwinski is the Solidarity official responsible for its dealings with foreign trade unions—a man with the knowing manner of the French, who have strongly influenced Polish intellectual life. He begins his conversation with the worry that the Reagan administration could be provoking an international polarization that could be dangerous for Poland. He moves quickly to a discourse on the central importance of self-management of enterprises by the workers. But in almost the same breath, he extols the virtues of private farming over state farms and advocates a vastly broadened free-market system for Poland.

Such paradoxes abound. Scruffy college students who could be extras in a film about Berkeley in 1968 peddle anti-Communist literature on the campus quad. The workers who attended the July 13 conference of the Gdansk region of Solidarity, by contrast, are scrubbed, neat, and earnest—people looking for what radicals here would have called the middle-class life.

The Polish awakening seems to be a movement without an enemy—at least not an acknowledged one. This seems odd to those of us who have grown accustomed to a certain vehemence in political discussion. Poles speak of "our friends to the East" with the most subtle of smiles. Last week Poland was bathed in sunshine, and a drive through the countryside—except for the griminess that afflicts all structures here, large and small—seemed like a drive through France. The grain is tall and thick, and children sit by the roadside with baskets of berries and piles of vegetables. Poles relish the sunshine; girls in sundresses grace the Warsaw streets. There are long lines at many shops: last week it was cigarettes, film, soap, vodka, and—yes!—newspapers. A tough, hard-pressed country in a remarkably relaxed mood.

But there are worries about what winter will bring. At the party congress, Kania is working to rebuild an effective organization. As one Solidarity adviser puts it, using Orwell's terms, "The inner party is consolidating its control over the outer party, the transmission system." Solidarity's workers and farmers are struggling to strengthen their own organizations and to provide real, if sometimes modest, benefits for their members. Walesa argues for a greater emphasis on building upon the 640 labor agreements already won, and less to winning new agreements. His, too, is a strategy of consolidation.

When the weather turns bad and the party house is in order, Kania may turn the screw. The only real weapon the workers have to defend their gains is the strike, and surely some in the general public can be turned against strikes that further disrupt Poland's already chaotic economy. Some of Solidarity's own

(continued on page 8)

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Correspondence

Arming the populace

To the editors:
I applaud the basic direction of Paul Fussell's article concerning the Second Amendment ("A Well Regulated Militia," *TNR*, June 27). I would add one provision to his package, though: membership in the militia should be mandatory. There should be no excuse for an able-bodied adult to shirk his or her civic responsibility, and every adult should learn to handle firearms safely and effectively.

However, I disagree that service in the militia should be so . . . well, disagreeable. The essential reason for a militia is to provide military experience for the common person, not just those hardy few who thrive on airborne push-ups. The wisdom of the Second Amendment is in its realization that it is only by investing real power in the populace that a free state can remain free. Fussell's suggestions are clearly intended to disarm the populace and are therefore inimical to freedom. It should rather be the goal of the militia to encourage membership and instill a sense of civic responsibility. I have my rifle. Where do I sign up?

Bernard B. Beard
Fort Worth, Texas

Home health care

To the editors:
One way to avoid "Home Care Ripoff" as described in the June 6 issue of *The New Republic* is to have all or most government-financed services provided directly by government employees rather than through intermediaries and contractors. We could have a system, similar to the educational system, in which the government provides home health care to most people who need it and privately owned health care companies provide care to those able and willing to pay for their services.

My union, the American Federation of Government Employees, has been campaigning for a long time to have more work done by government employees and less work contracted out to businesses. Sometimes it's to the advantage of the taxpayers to have work contracted out; sometimes not. Even if waste and inefficiency in government-contracted work resulted in comparable costs, at least the money would be spread around more evenly and would not end up in Michael Morrisroe's Cayman Islands bank account.

Mark D. Weiner
Los Angeles, California

A better brew

To the editors:
With respect to "A Fool and His Money: Slots and Suds" by Nicholas von Hoffman (*TNR*, June 20), I plead guilty to von Hoffman's label of a "downcast liberal who doesn't believe in Reaganomics," but there he and I part company, at least on the subject of beer stocks.

At the cost of a single share of Anheuser-Busch stock (selling then at $35), von Hoffman could buy the basic paraphernalia and ingredients to make, bottle, and cap two cases of his own beer or ale. In less than six weeks, his beer/ale would rise spectacularly (in quality) while Bud, Schlitz, and Miller would remain unchanged.

Why are people in rural Vermont paying $4.50 a six-pack for Moosehead from Canada, Fosters from Australia, or even Heineken? It's because, as Mike Royko once suggested, "Most American beer tastes as if it had been brewed through a horse."

It costs me about $11 to brew two cases of excellent lager, ale, or stout. It would take more than Clydesdales to drag me back to that bland, tasteless swill that passes for commercial beer in this country.

William Mares, Secretary
Vermont Homebrewers Association
Burlington, Vermont

The fly in the ointment

To the editors:
Michael Kinsley shows the courage to "risk getting labeled as a crank" by citing Henry George in exactly the right place, and at just the right time ("High on the Hog, II: Pelf and Petroleum," *TNR*, June 13). It is the best evidence I've seen yet that the liberals are going to find their way out of present bewilderment.

Mr. Kinsley is right. There never has been a more "ardent supply-sider" than George. He has much in common with those who currently rule the national roost. The difference, though, is that George understood what supply-siders are still overlooking when they insist "there ain't no such thing as a free lunch." He knew that there is such a thing as a free lunch, and that it's the fly in the ointment. He tried to explain to us a century ago what Mr. Kinsley made clear again at the start of part one on hoggishness: the basic fallacy in the assumption that the greatest consumers and the greatest producers are one and the same. Mr. Kinsley, in so doing, is no crank. He's a self-starter. Now the trick is to put the car into gear.

Richard Noyes
Salem Observer
Salem, New Hampshire

American nationalism

To the editors:
One can only applaud the main point of Jack Beatty's interesting piece, "The Patriotism of Values (*TNR*, July 4 & 11). It was not only self-defeating for liberals to accept the stigma of anti-Americanism, it was also self-contradictory for anyone who claimed to support personal liberty and social justice to express contempt for the only country in the world that was founded with those values in mind.

However, it seems to me the model of society least expressive of a truly American nationalism would be the system of corvée labor and social discipline which Mr. Beatty proposes. It is possible, even likely, that the United States will have to reinstitute conscription sometime during this decade, for demographic reasons if nothing else. The need for and the use of large armies is a deplorable necessity imposed by the kind of international community we inhabit. But no good will come of trying to indoctrinate Americans with the idea that such commandeering of individual lives is a normal duty of citizenship, and that citizenship so defined should form the spirit of the community. The same objection applies to Mr. Beatty's suggestions for a national incomes policy: it may become necessary, but the more

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The editors welcome correspondence from *TNR*'s readers. Letters intended for publication should include the correspondent's full name, address, and telephone number, should be typed double-spaced and held to under 200 words.

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members might be turned against intellectuals who sometimes seem preoccupied with vague and untested schemes for grand social and economic transformation. If Kania doesn't really want to roll back Solidarity, his "friends to the East" will surely lean on him.

Westerners who follow Solidarity often look for reflections in it of their own ideological attitudes. The new right applauds the rejection of total government, and the new left hopes that democratization can redeem the idea of state socialism. But at this moment, the West can probably help most by staying out of Solidarity's discussions of ideology and strategy and doing what is possible to assist it in strengthening its basic organizational structure.

Our own trade union movement knows something about this sort of thing. The AFL-CIO is sending printing supplies, office equipment, and manuals on union organization and collective bargaining. When the Polish party congress is over and the world press has again scattered, Solidarity will still be struggling to hold the door open so that Poland's experiment can continue. That difficult, paradoxical experiment may not fit any of our own political patterns. But Americans of every political disposition should be able to endorse the idea that, as a popular song here has it, "Poland should be Poland again."

Penn Kemble

Penn Kemble is a founder of the Coalition for a Democratic Majority and president of the Foundation for Democratic Education.

A Fool and His Money

Moolah in the Sky

People who don't notice 100-degree weather can tell it's high summer by noting that Eastern Airlines is offering big discounts again between New York and California. Eastern shills cheap coast-to-coast tickets less out of commendable competitive fury than out of a need to do something with the empty planes from its north-south Florida runs. Selling discounted tickets so that the planes break even going east to west is better business than having them lose money all summer flying up and down the Atlantic coast. Not all low fares are desperation moves by airline companies with fleets of not yet paid for jets. Deregulation has created a new, probably quite profitable, cheapo air industry.

In the good old days when the government protected consumers by doling out airline routes to create quasi-monopolies and dictating the price of tickets, the airlines could be sloppy about things like efficiency and pay increases. Everything could be passed along to the consumer. Competition was restricted to service frills. Airline advertising on TV took the form of saying your pastry chef was better than your competitor's. Is it surprising that the coffee-tea-or-me stewardi of the period got the reputation of being high-altitude hookers, airborne geisha girls?

Deregulation has ended that. No more *cordon bleu* TV come-ons. Airline luxury these days is the promise of a clean vomit bag and a month-old copy of *People*. A number of the new air cheapos even charge you for checking your luggage, which, incidentally, is not automatically transferred on if you're changing planes to reach your final destination.

Air Cheapo operates out of less spiffy facilities, which means little in an age when first-class service on the glamour lines like American and TWA is hardly more than passable. Air Cheapo flies cheaper planes. The quality is the same, but they've all been recently purchased in this period when secondhand jetliners have been taking the same kind of price beating that secondhand gas-guzzlers have been taking at the used car lot.

The biggest advantage of the new airline companies seems to lie in the area of labor costs. *Business Week* reports that "because industry pay scales are based on seniority, the brand-new airlines have rock bottom labor costs. Captains start at about $30,000, not much lower than entry level at other airlines. But at the older carriers, a captain's pay averages $70,000 and can rise to $120,000. . . . Pilots at the upstarts put in double the 'stick time' (actual flying time) of those at older airlines." At Muse Air, a new line shuttling twixt Dallas and Houston, the pilots have been shifted to piecework. They get paid by the flight, which may explain why Muse's planes land, load, and take off in ten minutes.

The oldest of the new is Southwest Airlines. It has new, efficient planes and a much admired organization. It pays no dividends, so if you buy it, you'll be doing so in hopes that the price of its stock will go up, something it has already been doing at a great rate this year. It started out at about $37 in January and is up to around $50. This is a very flashy, hot stock among the airlines stocks, which have recovered as a body from a couple of very bad years. It's worthwhile gambling Southwest will go up another ten dollars or so, but don't buy it if you're the greedy type who holds on to a good thing too long. Tell your stockbroker to sell half of what you've bought once the price goes up ten or 15 percent. Don't be a piggy.

Now for a frumpy airline that has never been

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Nick's Picks . . . Bart's Charts

We aren't yet quite ready to join in this month's round of merger mania, so Conoco (the nation's ninth-largest oil company) will have to wait at least another month before *TNR*'s Fool Fund (the nation's third-largest hypothetical investment portfolio) enters the bidding war. In the midst of the great movement to merge, our inaction probably will go unnoticed, but we need some time to reflect on what is happening. One aspect of what is happening is that corporations are showing a great willingness to borrow huge sums of money at ever-increasing interest rates in order to pursue their acquisitions. One month ago, a one-billion-dollar line of credit was considered extraordinary, but this month Du Pont has established a six-billion-dollar credit line, while Texaco and Mobil, both potential acquirers, have gone to the banks for over five billion dollars each. Several other companies have joined the list of three-billion-dollar borrowers. And all of this with the prime rate at 20½ percent.

The axiom used to be that interest rates reflected the inflation rate. As inflation increased, lenders charged a higher price for the money they were lending. But now, while the Consumer Price Index holds out the hope of a return to single-digit inflation, interest rates are hovering in the stratosphere. Our money market fund, Dreyfus Liquid Assets, paid us an average 17.1 percent interest over the last month and averaged a record 17.3 percent over the last seven days.

Murray Weidenbaum, chairman of the Council of Economic Advisers, has declared that "double-digit inflation as a phenomenon is behind us"; monetarists credit sky-high interest rates and other tight clamps on money growth with lowering inflationary expectations and thereby moderating inflation. But others argue that inflation is not moderating at all. Food and oil prices have stabilized in recent months, resulting in a much slower increase in the Consumer Price Index. But the underlying inflation rate, the major component of which is the cost of labor, continues to rise inexorably. This is why interest rates are remaining so high and stock prices so low.

Which came first, the chicken or the egg? Have high interest rates caused inflation to moderate or has an underlying high inflation rate necessitated high interest rates? Which brings us, in an indirect way, to this month's really bad news: we lost our live broiler futures. We bought our broiler contracts on margin, paying only $1,000 for each contract worth over $15,000, with our broker lending us the balance. When the contracts declined two and a half cents a pound—about 75 percent of our equity—the broker gave us the choice of putting up more money or liquidating. We chose the latter and collected $20,500, leaving us with a loss of almost $75,000 after paying the broker's fee. Our record is now one to two in the commodities market, but we aren't always the fool. The Thomas Nelson Publishing Stock we sold two months ago for $28½ a share is now selling for $14 a share.

This month we will begin by selling Nucor Steel to provide us with some cash for new investments. Nucor is selling for $77¼ a share, up 27 percent over the $60⅝ we paid for it last October. The net proceeds from Nucor are deposited into Dreyfus Liquid Assets which, together with our chicken money and this month's interest, give us $204,137. This month's selection is Southwest Airlines at $46¾ a share. We will buy 2,100 shares, costing us $98,175, with $982 (one percent) going to our broker.

After 56 weeks, our portfolio looks like this:

	June 9	July 15
93 Beatrice Foods bonds	$ 74,749	$ 76,260
156 Chrysler Financial Corp. bonds	98,475	99,060
140 Resorts International bonds	88,375	86,100
11,250 shares MONY Mortgage	75,938	78,750
1,640 shares Nucor	133,250	
11,778 shares Templeton Growth Fund	92,575	92,693
2,250 shares Gulf Oil	73,969	86,625
95 fresh broiler futures on margin	86,450	
7,400 shares Kinder-Care	119,325	107,300
2,800 shares Harte-Hanks	99,400	100,800
2,500 shares Anheuser-Busch	97,188	94,375
2,100 shares Southwest Airlines		98,175
Dreyfus Liquid Assets	57,062	104,980
TOTAL	$1,096,756	**$1,025,118**

The score so far (since June 20, 1980):

Consumer Price Index (estimated)	+10.5 percent
Dow Jones Industrial Average	+ 9.2 percent
TNR's Fool Fund	+ 2.5 percent

Bart Rubenstein

Bart Rubenstein is general manager of *Channels* magazine.

accused of glamour: Northwest. You may be better off buying a share in it than a ticket on it. It can be rough on its passengers, but it has a smooth balance sheet. As airlines go, Northwest is virtually debt free. Its planes are relatively new, so it is not stuck with a bunch of aging kerosene burners to be replaced at a cost of billions. Indeed, Northwest is such a rich sky-flying turtle that for its stockholders it would be better off dead or merged. If the line was closed down tomorrow, its stock might fetch $50 more a share than the $30 it has been selling at of late.

Who knows, somebody might put up megabucks to take it over, although recent mergers in the airlines industry haven't been especially happy. Republic Airlines, the winged result of mating North Central and Southern, has failed to give investors that special kick that comes from a profit surge. The star-crossed union of Pan Am and National has resulted in nothing but debt, chaos, and countless firings and hirings along executive row. Mergers are frequently the work of lawyers and accountants who underestimate or ignore the difficulties in running the new, merged entity. The Pan Am-National assignation can't be blamed on the lawyers, though. It was a simple case of two weak lovers who each thought the other had the strength (or markets) he or she lacked.

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The Du Pont-Conoco match, on the other hand, is all sex and no love. The horny boys from Delaware are seven-billion-dollar johns chasing an oil hooker from Stamford, Connecticut, who has been parading her wares for some time. Nor is Du Pont's the only Cadillac circling the block where Conoco struts her stuff. Seagram, Texaco, Dome Petroleum, and Mobil are cruisin' for a smoochin', too, but Du Pont seems the likeliest to score. Will the thrill be worth it? If Du Pont had wanted an oil company to assure it raw material for the petrochemical part of its business, it could have bought a much smaller one to satisfy its needs. As it is, a relatively debt-free company has had to clean out its cash drawer and then go out and borrow around six billion dollars to pay for an enormous oil company, a business Du Pont has no experience running. The interest on that loan will run somewhere over one billion dollars a year, though that's nothing to worry about since Conoco is a money-maker. Still, one wonders if Du Pont wouldn't have done better to spend the same amount of money doing what it has been doing very successfully ever since Thomas Jefferson first suggested to those nice French boys that they go into the gunpowder business.

APPARENTLY the urge to merge no matter what got hold of the guys at Du Pont as they thrashed around Stamford, pulling at their silk rep ties and hysterically putting together their deal, the biggest and perhaps the silliest in corporate history. Not that the merging virus is confined to the leafier places of the Nutmeg State. France's Société Nationale Elf Aquitaine went out and bought, with the blessings of the new Socialist government, Texasgulf, Inc. A year ago this mining company's shares were selling at around $19. Elf Aquitaine was taking them off their owners' hands last week for $56. If that's not Gallic courtesy, what is?

Impecunious liberals who don't have even $19 with which to buy a share of oil stock need not despair. The Fool has a bargain that will permit persons with the smallest of life savings to lose them while having a lot more fun than betting on the state lottery. For amusement, if not for profit, your fool recommends Plano Petroleum of Plano, Texas. It has oil leases in Kansas, Texas, and Wyoming, and a couple of wells which are said to be oozing droplets of crude on a more or less regular basis in Barton and Hodgeman counties of the Sunflower State. Plano stock sells for around 30 cents a share. For 300 samoleons or thereabouts you can have 300,000 shares and become a major voice in a real, true-to-life American corporation which is, by the by, run by men who do have experience in the oil business. Just figure what your profits would be if another group of French Socialists with fat wallets happen by.

It is true, however, that the greatest chance for making money lies in the long odds presented by the smaller companies. One such is Scientific Radio Systems, Inc. It'll cost you more than two bits a share, but at the $12 to $13 level it has been selling, SRS is still comparatively inexpensive. SRS was started about 12 years ago with the idea of converting existing advanced technological knowledge into sound, well-engineered, reliable products in the broadcasting field. It has been doing well ever since with its radio telephones, which are used by governments and businesses around the globe, wherever the tom-tom system or the carrier pigeon service is deemed inadequate. Now SRS has a new product, Meteor Burst Communications. "Meteor Burst bounces signals off the ionized trail left by meteors entering the earth's atmosphere about 60 miles or so above the earth," explains SRS vice president Neal Garman. "There are literally billions of meteors—most no bigger than your fingernail—entering the atmosphere each day with only an extremely few that don't burn up within seconds." SRS equipment constantly locates those minute puffs of star dust, uses them to ricochet part of a message off one and then locks on to another to continue the process.

What makes Meteor Burst commercially appealing is that it does what communication satellites do, but a whole lot cheaper. A satellite is a multibillion-dollar proposition. It can wear out, it can go on the fritz, and, given its location, it's hard to repair. It can even get lost. (One of RCA's did a couple of years ago, although the rumor around Rockefeller Center that Fred Silverman, the recently sacked head of the company's NBC subsidiary, was aboard is probably not true.) By contrast, a Meteor Burst hookup able to send messages 1,200 miles costs $60,000. When it breaks, a repairperson comes over with a screwdriver and fixes the bugger without having to go into outer space.

SOME PEOPLE may not care to hitch the wagon containing their savings to a star but would like to put a little dough into the communications industry. They might consider cashing in on Americans' obsessive fear of being out of touch, we will not say with what. It used to be that only obstetricians and the president had to be reachable at all times; now practically everyone does. Whether it is just a status symbol or hysteria at the thought of missing out on something important, the paging industry is growing faster than they can manufacture the irritating little boxes that go beeping off in Mr. or Ms. Important Person's purse or pocket to tell them to call a certain number to pick up a message. Radiofone Corp., with stocks selling at around $24, even has a beeper with a little display window that can show up to ten numbers. Thus the customer can be told what number to call without phoning in for instructions. Radiofone already has 27,000-plus customers in the hugely populated Connecticut to Delaware corridor. It is signing up customers hand over fist, and in no time at all it should have some hundreds of thousands of folks walking or driving around with those irksome gadgets. No point, though, in simply petting one's personal peeve. Invest

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in it. Only remember one thing: the Fool's recommendations don't pay off unless you swear a blood oath by all that is secular and humanist that you will tithe one-half your winnings to Americans for Democratic Action and the Sierra Club.

Fool's Gold: In an imperfect world, few objects are as imperfect as the bill, passed by the House Ways and Means Committee and the Senate Finance Committee, to "save" the Savings and Loan Industry. The bill would empower any bank, including Bank of America and Citibank, to sell tax exempt notes or IOUs. The buyer would not have to pay taxes on the interest, so the interest the banks would have to pay would be lower. The way the bill is jiggered these tax exempt notes would be no benefit to people earning much less than 50 grand a year. Representative Sam Gibbons, a Florida Democrat, cast his vote against the bill, adding in one of those bursts of cynicism that makes politics such fun, "This is one of the worst pieces of legislation I've ever introduced."

Nicholas von Hoffman

Dancing to Reagan's tune.

The Boll Weevils' Ball

Back in the not so distant days when Democrat meant northern liberal, and member of Congress mostly meant Democrat, conservative southerners of the party sat and grumbled together at the back of the House chamber on "redneck row." They were better known then for their personal flamboyance than for their political clout. Today they're courted by the White House, lionized by the press, and ensconced in the enviable position of controlling the House. They played a crucial role in the administration's recent budget victories, and have been basking in the limelight of controversy ever since. For the first time in more than a decade, the boll weevils, as they have come to be known, are asserting themselves as a political force to be reckoned with.

In fact the rise of the boll weevils is less a result of clever maneuvering than of circumstance. The 1980 elections brought 192 Republicans and 243 Democrats to the House. However, the seemingly comfortable Democratic majority is deceptive: if all the Republicans vote together—as they pretty much have been doing—only 26 Democratic defections are needed for them to prevail. The 46 conservative Democrats thus become a pivotal force. The arithmetical logic of the House count was put to the test in the administration's May 7 triumph on the fiscal 1982 budget which slashed social programs, and during Reagan's June 25 victory on congressional voting procedure for that budget. In the latter case, the administration trounced the Democrats 217 to 210. Of the 29 Democrats who bolted to the president's side, 24 were southerners.

Whatever the cause of their recently elevated status, the boll weevils have lost no time in seizing the opportunities it presents. Some 47 Democrats from 15 states have banded together in an informal group called the Conservative Democratic Forum, whose purpose is to exert pressure on the administration as well as on fellow Democrats and, according to Texas representative Phil Gramm, to "move the party into the mainstream of American thinking." By that, Gramm means directing the party in a more conservative, "fiscally responsible" direction. Gramm heartily embraces Jack Kemp's supply-side economics, and he was instrumental in securing Democratic support for the Reagan budget plan. In fact, he co-sponsored the Gramm-Latta proposal, which tacked on $6.6 billion more in budget cuts than the president had asked for. "You could wipe out the social programs entirely, and that would be just fine with Phil," said one southern Democratic colleague. Gramm believes the CDF eventually will form a political action group to promote conservative Democratic candidates in a manner similar to the National Conservative Political Action Committee. According to a recent article in the *Washington Post*, he already has proposed a joint effort with Republicans to oust House Speaker Tip O'Neill. Gramm says with equanimity: "I am never going to vote on partisan lines on any issue."

As might be expected, Gramm and his cohorts have caused a brouhaha within the Democratic party. Reactions have ranged from mild disapproval to demands for severe censure motions. Among the toughest critics of the boll weevils is Congressman Mickey Leland. A Democrat from Texas, Leland feels particularly chagrined that Texas provided the greatest number of defectors during the recent budget vote. Labeling members of the CDF "traitors" who threaten the Democratic party's survival, Leland has introduced a resolution to the Texas State Democratic party that would deny these "treacherous apostates" any future party assistance of any kind, including campaign funds. Charles Manatt, chairman of the Democratic National Committee, has publicly stated that if the boll weevils' pattern of voting Republican continues, punitive measures should be undertaken. Representative Toby Moffett and House Majority Leader Jim Wright also have expressed displeasure with the southern Democrats' unseemly behavior.

Yet Gramm does not feel the least bit threatened: "Frankly, I feel sorry for some of my critics. For 20 years they have dominated the federal government. Their programs have not worked, and the people have rejected them." Representative John Breaux of Louisiana confesses that he enjoys the controversy: "I love things when they're close. When both sides need your vote, you can make the most of it." Breaux likes to feel important. The night before the budget vote, he was at

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a dinner party. "I get a call from some White House staffer and I tell him I'm undecided," Breaux says complacently. "Fifteen minutes later, I get another call—from the president of the United States. 'We'd really like you to be with us on this one,' he says. Then he calls me again the next morning before the vote." Many southern Democrats who never met with President Carter already have had several sessions with Reagan.

Still, the southern Democrats' allegiance to the Reagan administration stems from more than political giddiness. Their conservatism reflects growing changes in southern politics as a whole. In recent years the region has made a decided shift to the right; nine of the 33 House seats that switched to Republican control are in the south. As race faded as the dominant political issue, so did the Democratic party's inveterate hold over the region. Political analysts like Michael Barone and Richard E. Cohen see Carter's 1976 sweep of every southern state except Virginia as an artificial victory which resulted from discomfort with the Republicans over Watergate and from Carter's appeal to persistent regional pride. In fact, Carter is the only Democrat since 1948 to have carried more than seven of the southern states. According to one former Carter aide, the Democratic party's image is now a liability to southern politicians. "The party has become identified as anti-business, and anti-growth. And in the south, that means anti-prosperity. Tip O'Neill has become a symbol of runaway government, and whenever he pops out, the Republicans score media points."

The boll weevils, despite their current euphoria, are in a precarious position. Most southern districts voted for Ronald Reagan in the November election, and many Democratic representatives from the region hold their seats by only a slight electoral margin. As Phil Gramm is quick to point out, not one conservative was defeated in the last election, while the seven House Democratic incumbents from the south who lost were moderates. "The Republicans have got us on the run," conceded Representative Beryl Anthony Jr. of Arkansas to the *National Journal*. "We Democrats must concentrate on another strategy or else we could lose the whole region."

This constitutes a striking difference from the boll weevils' powerful forebears. Two decades ago, the pivotal southern bloc had joined Republicans in a "Dixiecrat" coalition that all but controlled Capitol Hill. It was led by men like Sam Rayburn and George Mahon of Texas, Howard Smith of Virginia, and Clarence Cannon of Missouri, who achieved power and prominence through the rigid code of the seniority system. As their ranking increased, so did their reputations and their political security. In contrast, today's boll weevils are young (the average age is 49), they have no clear leader, and most of them are in their first, second, or third terms in Congress, holding little individual power in the political hierarchy. Lacking solid Democratic constituencies and strong voter recognition, the southern Democrats have felt compelled to maintain a high conservative profile. Political survival was a prime impetus to the formation of the CDF. North Carolina representative Bill Hefner says: "I know several representatives who held their nose and voted for Reagan's budget and for Gramm-Latta because of pressure."

The sudden attention and visibility may be heady stuff to the boll weevils, but their long-range prospects are not promising. If Republicans make big gains in the 1982 elections, the CDF will lose its coveted swing-vote position and will slink back to obscurity. If, on the other hand, the Democrats retain control of the House, the party is likely to reprimand forum members for their perfidy by denying them important committee chairmanships and leadership positions. President Reagan has stated that he couldn't, in good conscience, campaign against anyone who voted for his programs. However, southern Democrats are deceiving themselves if they believe that the Republicans will forgo control of the House in return for a handful of Democratic votes. As Bill Hefner put it, "That's the most ridiculous thing I've ever heard of. If they think they're going to get a free ride just beacuse they voted with the administration, they're whistling past the graveyard." Unless the boll weevils can find a way to reconcile their conservative leanings with the interests of the Democratic party, they may end up just whistling Dixie.

Michael A. Lerner

A nation of shop-smashers.

Riots Black and White

London

Everyone knows, except perhaps a skinhead or two, that Louis XVI inquired of a courtier on July 14, 1789, "Is it a revolt?" and was told, "No, sire, a revolution." What no one knows in England in the second week of July this year is what to call the epidemic of riots that has spread from one city to another during the last ten days. Not a revolution, of course, and not a revolt, since these imply a proclamation of purpose. But certainly something has happened to shake the complacency of the British about the nature of their society almost to its roots.

The British are not a riotous people. The last serious public disorders they knew were caused by Sir Oswald Mosleys's fascist proselytizing in the East End of London in 1936. And a quick dip into the newspaper files will reveal how small in scale and limited in scope those disorders were by comparison with the recent outbreaks in Liverpool and Manchester. So unriotous are

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the British that there exists no special means of checking disorder when it occurs. Most of Britain's Common Market partners maintain large riot police forces, equipped, trained, and ready to make violent demonstration a risky business: the CRS in France, the *celeri* in Italy, the *Bereitschaftpolizei* in Germany. A British chief constable, confronted by emergency, can do little more than telephone his off-duty officers to report back to the station, authorize them to draw their truncheons if necessary, and hope that help will arrive from neighboring police authorities.

THE RECIPE did not work in April at Brixton, at the earliest of the year's outbreaks. For two successive nights, the shopping streets of this run-down London suburb were pillaged by large mobs of young people. Most were black, because Brixton fortuitously became the place where West Indian immigrants first settled after World War II and then brought friends and relations. But because Brixton is Brixton—almost, though not quite, what Harlem means to New Yorkers —the riot there was thought to be a local phenomenon. It was widely agreed that the problems it revealed would be palliated, if not solved, by the appointment of a commission of inquiry. The commission was still investigating the riot, and its proceedings were closely being followed as one Brixton after another began to erupt all over urban England.

The next outbreak occurred at Southall. But again it was agreed that the phenomenon was local. The people of Southall are Indian immigrants and, unlike the ingenuous and undereducated Jamaicans and Trinidadians who arrived in Brixton 30 years ago, they take advantage of all that Britain offers, by way of commercial and public opportunity, for self-advancement. Indian children excel at school, and will soon excel at university. Their parents have monopolized certain areas of public employment (at London's nearby Heathrow Airport, Indians sweep the floors, run the restaurants, and drive the cabs) and those who have thereby accumulated the necessary nest egg are now founding small businesses all over the London area.

The Southall riot on Friday, July 3, was provoked by the appearance in town of a large party of skinheads, who had arrived to hear a skinhead rock group perform at a local tavern. Skinheads are an unpleasant lot. They wear their hair shorn to the scalp, faded jeans supported by suspenders, and calf-length kicking boots. Most towns have their share and most are docile as lambs. Their style generally seems to be expression enough of whatever it is that they feel about the world. But some big-city skinheads are genuinely violent, a trait brought out by soccer matches and attendance at their rock concerts. Southall's visitors appear to have come looking for trouble. Some of them attacked an Indian shop and the family that owned it. By the end of the evening, the tavern had been burned out and 80 of the 650 assembled police had been injured.

According to the police, the officers were separating two hostile mobs. But because the National Front, Britain's shop-soiled fascist party, makes a play for skinhead recruits, and because some skinheads respond, some of Southall's Indians denounced the police activity as "racist." This is a charge that the weird left in Britain regularly propagates. The weird left has no following among the Indian community, whose attitude toward Britain approximates that of the East India Company's voyagers toward Bengal in the 18th century. But the charge strikes a chord with the West Indian young, who are arrested for street offenses much more frequently than their white counterparts.

The rights and wrongs of that disparity are the principal substance of the Brixton inquiry. But what has happened since Southall makes both the inquiry and Brixton look like history. On Saturday, July 4, a riot broke out in Liverpool which made international news. The focus was Toxteth, a riverside slum with a large black population. At the end of two days of continuous fighting between the police and the rioters, 200 policemen had been injured and tens of millions of dollars in damage done. Lengths of whole streets had been burned out, hundreds of Molotov cocktails thrown at buildings and police, dozens of rioters and looters arrested, and all other news driven off the front pages of British papers. The report of the first use in the United Kindom, outside Northern Ireland, of tear gas to disperse the mob went virtually unnoticed. But on Tuesday there was rioting in the Manchester slum of Moss Side that was almost as sensational, if less destructive. And over the weekend of July 11 there were more outbreaks in at least six areas of London, in Birmingham, Wolverhampton, Hull, Leicester, and Derby. Almost everywhere it took the form of attacks on shops, and then against the police and their vehicles when they appeared. In many other places in and around city centers, the precautions taken by shopkeepers to protect their property has generated almost as much anxiety as the news of nearby trouble itself.

AND YET, with the boards going up across the shop windows, people are saying that the worst is over. For there is a widespread and almost certainly accurate belief that a great deal of what has happened outside Brixton, Toxteth, and perhaps Moss Side is what is coming to be called "copycat" rioting. It is certainly not racist, because, even in the most densely black and Asian areas, local whites have joined enthusiastically in both the fighting and the looting. There have been no reports of white violence against black, or vice versa, except in those areas where the new Indian entrepreneurs have had their windows broken and goods stolen, in which case West Indians and whites have had an equal hand in it.

So what is behind Britain's so far short and not very hot summer? By all outward appearances, it is a highly localized, unlethal war between poor, young West

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Indians, assisted by their poor, young white neighbors, and the police. In some places, it has been whites versus police *tout court*. Extreme left-wing agitators have been observed at work. But, as a representative of one of the better-known parties admitted, "I am afraid it cannot be said that we have organized" what has gone on. Television has certainly been a more effective tocsin than the Socialist Workers party's gritty leaflets.

Outward appearances may not be too far from inner substance. Britain at the moment has three-quarters of a million unemployed under the age of 21. Unemployment among young blacks (which in this context almost never means Indians) is higher than the national average and in Liverpool reaches as high as 50 percent. Welfare payments keep the young unemployed fed, but do not keep them occupied or amused. Amusement is found in roaming the streets, and there's not much amusement there. Street incidents, which usually mean the arrest of a black youth by a white policeman, therefore quickly draw a crowd. And this summer the crowds have not dispersed after jeering the policeman and his suspect off the scene. Bash a copper, break a window, help yourself is what has happened instead.

Britain's black communities are too small for Brixton and Toxteth to be seen as a portent, even when allowance is made for white participation. It seems unlikely that next year's summer will bring a repetition of this year's sensations. But the mere extinction of the riots will not dissipate an economic and cultural problem of deep complexity. Those who have rioted, black and white, do not belong. Schools have failed to persuade them that they should. Low-level jobs, when they become available, will not pay the sort of money that makes belonging seem worthwhile. The police meanwhile will hold the line. While they do, political, official, employed, peaceful Britain—which is 90 percent of the country—will have to think how its submerged tenth can be brought up to the surface.

John Keegan

The party of FDR, JFK, and 2,500 commodity speculators.

The Shame of the Democrats

by Michael Kinsley

Observing its performance since last November, good people everywhere view the future of the Democratic party with growing indifference. It is run by lawyer-operators with no commitment to any particular political values. It is filled with politicians who will do or say anything for a word or a dollar of support. It represents a dwindling collection of special interest groups whose interests are less and less those of either the general populus or the tired and poor. In the face of the conservative ideological revival, the Democratic party has collapsed not just politically but morally.

The party's abjection can be measured by studying the economic program that is taking final shape on Capitol Hill, and by comparing it to the original Reagan proposals of last February. The two are quite similar, of course. Reagan has gotten his way on most things. This is a measure of the Democrats' political humiliation. The moral humiliation is that the final program is worse for traditional Democratic values than Reagan's initial plan. The poor, the working class, and indeed the country would have been better off if the Democrats had played no role at all in shaping the forthcoming tax and budget cuts.

The Democrats have done practically nothing to mitigate the general unfairness of Reagan's scheme. Instead, they have concentrated on saving or inventing various special goodies. This is less a strategy than a panicky surrender to lobbying pressure by politicians desperate for support from any quarter. Indeed, the Democrats have sabotaged their own best strategy. Reagan's millions of middle-class supporters don't yet realize that his economic plan, proudly billed as "not a redistribution program," in fact redistributes money from people like themselves to a thin stratum of the economic elite. Democrats should be roasting the Reaganites with language like this:

> They went out and gave 2,500 wealthy speculators on the floors of the Chicago Boards of Trade and other commodity exchanges a tax break of $400 million. Now, couple that with what they've done in the oil field, offering the oil producers 1,000-barrel-a-day exemption from windfall profits [tax]. They don't have a poor man's bill. . . . They're trying to buy their way to victory over us.

Sound good? Too bad. It was Treasury Secretary Donald Regan talking about the House Democrats on CBS's "Face the Nation" last Sunday. Leaving aside the

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Dan Rostenkowski and Tip O'Neill by Vint Lawrence for *The New Republic*

potential social uses of $400 million, the political futility of the whole exercise makes you want to cry. How many of those 2,500 wealthy commodity speculators, do you suppose, are actually going to vote Democratic?

The House and the Senate have passed slightly different versions of Reagan's budget cuts for fiscal 1982. The House, you may recall, has a Democratic majority, but Reagan was so pleased with what they produced for him that he asked the Republican Senate to accept the House version. The senators declined, and the bills are now in conference. There will be no unseemly quarrels over social welfare. In February, the notorious "Stockman Hit List" proposed cuts of $1.8 billion in the food stamp program. The House graciously cut $1.9 billion. Reagan wanted to change the rules for Aid to Families with Dependent Children in order to prune $520 million. The House came up with over a billion. After such fine frugality, the members may perhaps be forgiven for cutting only $1.5 billion from the child nutrition program when Reagan had asked for $1.6 billion.

Lesser programs for the poor also fared badly. Reagan wanted to reduce subsidized housing construction from 260,000 units in 1982 to 225,000 units. The House knocked it down to 162,000 units. (The Senate won this particular Dutch auction with a low bid of 150,000.) The low-income home weatherization program disappeared without a trace, as Reagan wished. The Legal Services Corporation was saved, but at greatly reduced funding. Only a few health and social service programs were rescued from plunging into those black holes labeled block grants to the states.

But let it not be said that the Democrats stood idly by while all the great edifices of government were dismantled. When one has only limited influence, one saves it for important things like, um, agricultural price supports. The administration proposed saving the government a billion dollars, and consumers even more, simply by not raising price guarantees for dairy farmers. The House courageously rejected this callous idea. House Democrats also got an implied promise from Reagan to cooperate in an expanded sugar price support program. High sugar prices are something every decent society should guarantee its citizens, don't you think? And no farmer should be expected to pay today's high interest rates just because everyone else does. So thank goodness the House found enough money, against Reagan's wishes, to continue, and even expand, the subsidized loan program of the Farmers Home Administration.

Nor was the House deaf to the hungry sobs of large exporters like Boeing. Reagan wanted to limit Export-Import Bank loans to $4.4 billion, but the House found another $600 million in its heart. Carter domestic adviser Stuart Eizenstat broke his silence on Reaganomics to plead for this one in the *Washington Post*, so you know it must be an important progressive issue. In these difficult times, Medicare patients must expect to pay a larger "contribution" for their health care, but David Stockman went too far in proposing higher user fees for government services to private airplane and yacht owners. Reagan quietly ditched this shocking proposal, with the Democrats' blessing.

IS THIS inventory unfair to the Democratic leadership? After all, the final House budget was the product of a coalition between Republicans and dissident conservative Democrats (see "The Boll Weevils' Ball," page 11), who overturned an alternative budget worked out by the Democratic majority. "These are the times that try men's souls, and make no mistake about it," said Speaker Tip O'Neill shortly before the vote. The defeat of O'Neill's budget, on June 26, was treated in the press as an epochal shift of the political wind. Perhaps it was, but the defeated Democratic budget was a pretty tattered pennant for liberal hopes to rally around. It proposed slightly smaller cuts for AFDC, for Medicaid, for education, and for other social programs. But most of the matters for which the Democrats took their historic dive were the very sorts of things that give big government a bad name.

The Democrats, for example, wanted to keep giving out federal student loans to everyone, regardless of income. The Republican administration asked for, and got, a means test in order to limit these heavily subsidized loans to those who need them. Which position is more progressive? Reagan will save $900 million by adjusting federal pensions for inflation only once a

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year instead of twice. Social Security is only adjusted once, and the vast majority of private pensions aren't adjusted at all, yet the Democrats fought and died in a failed attempt to preserve this perk, along with subsidized school lunches for middle-income and affluent children. The Speaker waxed eloquent that evening about the cruelty of denying millions of old people the Social Security minimum payment. This is a controversial provision that benefits some worthy unfortunates, some who could qualify for other government help, and some federal retirees who are "double-dipping." No one knows for sure how many of each. But the Democrats didn't really propose to save this equivocal bit of distributive justice. They proposed to let present retirees keep it and future retirees do without. The Republicans declined to pay hush money to the elderly lobby. Which approach was more principled?

THE PROGRESS of the tax bill since February has been even more startling. Someone ignorant of American politics, observing the debate, would assume that the Democrats were quite literally the party of millionaires. Reagan amended his original proposal once in an attempt to get Democratic support. That version has passed the Senate Finance Committee. But last week the House Ways and Means Committee passed its own version, and the Democratic leadership is planning an all-out fight to avoid another defeat on the House floor.

The Democrats' proposed two-year personal tax cut is skewed ever-so-slightly more toward moderate income people (a matter of $45 to $60 for someone making under $30,000). They hope to get great political mileage out of this, though the Republicans are waiting in ambush with the message that their three-year cut is bigger for everybody in the end. Both plans give the most dramatic cuts to investment income of people in the top brackets. For business, the Democrats are adamant in their assurances that they have matched the Reagan offer dollar-for-dollar, though they have done it in different ways. "Under our proposal, those people can buy a Mercedes Benz in only four years," Representative Kenneth Holland, Democrat of South Carolina, bragged last week. In fact, the Democratic plan eventually will let a Mercedes be written off in one year. The Democratic plan makes marginally more sense. After a long phasing-in period, it would in essence impose no tax at all on the profits from business investments. The Republicans, by contrast, would have negative tax rates (the government pays you) on some investments, positive tax rates on others. Both plans represent a dramatic shift in the tax burden from capital to salaried labor.

President Reagan was prepared to stop there, for the moment. But to assuage the Democrats—the Democrats!—the administration-approved Senate bill now also includes a huge reduction in the estate tax; a tax break for business executives who get stock options; and a tax exclusion for $75,000 and more of income earned abroad. Representative Wyche Fowler, Democrat of Georgia (successor to Andrew Young), pointed proudly to this last tidbit last week as an example of the Democrats' concern for "Americans in upper bracket incomes." The Senate bill also includes the ludicrous "All Savers" tax-free savings certificate pushed by the savings and loan industry. Far from benefiting "all savers," the provision will give a tax break only to a typical taxpayer making more than $40,000 a year. To pay for it, the bill eliminates a $200-interest deduction that really was available to all savers. The Savings and Loans themselves admit that of the $230 billion they hope to bring in with this gimmick, only $5.5 billion will be new savings.

Daniel Rostenkowski, Democrat of Illinois, chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee, is not going to sit idly by while the Republicans give away millions. Why should they get all the credit? He is determined to match every offer in the Senate bill, and raise them on a couple. The question, he said last week, is "whether you want to lose courageously, or to win." On the estate tax, for example, he outbid the Republicans by adopting all their changes and adding a 28 percent tax cut for estates over $2.5 million. The Senate proposes a $2,500 credit against the windfall profits tax for oil royalty owners. The windfall tax, says the committee report, "may impose a hardship on many low and middle income taxpayers." No doubt it is some sort of hardship to pay $2,500 in taxes, though this hardship is mitigated somewhat by up to $30,000 in oil revenues such a tax represents. But why stop there in your concern for low- and middle-income taxpayers? Rostenkowski wants to exempt a thousand barrels a day from the windfall tax. This represents a cool $12 million a year per operator.

The Republican-controlled Senate Finance Committee, in a moment of dizziness, actually voted to close a complex loophole known as the commodity tax straddle. Rostenkowski's committee, hearing the pleas of those 2,500 commodity speculators, voted to narrow the loophole but not close it.

WHAT IS the point of a political party with so little sense of its own constituency that it behaves in this way? Charles Manatt, the Democratic party chairman, is a sunbelt-style business lawyer from Los Angeles (real estate, entertainment, banking, and so on). I suspect he knows precisely how a commodity straddle works, and hasn't a clue about the eligibility rules for AFDC. But his firm's Washington office will prosper, just as that of his predecessor, Robert Strauss, is prospering. Al Ullman, Rostenkowski's predecessor as chairman of Ways and Means, is now a Washington "consultant" and hired lobbyist for the group working to gut the estate tax. Rostenkowski may think a similar niche awaits him. But if the Democrats keep devaluing their own souls, others may conclude that this merchandise is no longer worth buying.

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What the Agee case did, and what it didn't do.

The Supreme Court's Travel Bug

by Nathan Lewin

The Supreme Court deserves the lumps it is taking on account of its decision in the Philip Agee passport case, but not for the reasons offered by most of those administering the lumps. It is being said with much head-shaking and hand-wringing that the Supreme Court's ruling has granted any secretary of state the legal power to deprive any American citizen of the right to travel abroad on any claimed ground of national security. That happens to be untrue. But the Court's decision is a bad one for other reasons.

The Supreme Court did not, in fact, confer or approve any sweeping authority to deny or revoke passports. It simply rejected Agee's argument that the secretary of state could never, under any circumstances, have the authority to revoke a US passport for national security reasons. And on this ground alone it sustained the revocation of Agee's passport in a case in which all the facts were conceded and no other legal issue was presented. The trouble is that in announcing this limited decision, the Court downgraded the constitutional right to travel abroad, thereby making it easier for future secretaries of state or for Congress to limit, in the same fashion or in others, an American citizen's right of international travel—a right that has been confirmed and re-confirmed by consensus throughout the civilized world for centuries.

Philip Agee was a CIA agent between July 1957 and October 1968. Six years after leaving the CIA, in October 1974, he announced "a new campaign to fight the United States CIA wherever it is operating." By "exposing" CIA officers and agents, Agee hoped this "new campaign" would "drive them out of the countries where they are operating." Agee then traveled around the world making speeches and writing articles. He was subsequently deported from or denied entry to England, France, and Holland. His 1975 book, *Inside the Company: A CIA Diary*, was not pre-cleared by the CIA, and, according to the agency, it contained secret information. The government filed a lawsuit against Agee about a year ago to prevent further printings of the book and to seize his royalties. Agee now lives in Hamburg, West Germany.

Soon after the takeover of the American embassy in Tehran in November 1979, the *New York Post* reported that Agee had been invited by Iran to participate in a public trial of the hostages. This report seems to have prompted the State Department to notify Agee in West Germany that it was revoking his passport. The department cited a regulation which permits a passport to be revoked if the passport-holder's "activities abroad are causing or are likely to cause serious damage to the national security or the foreign policy of the United States."

In an official letter hand-delivered on a Sunday morning by the US Consulate in Hamburg, Agee was told that his activities in various countries (including Mexico, England, Denmark, Jamaica, Cuba, and Germany) "have caused serious damage to the national security and foreign policy of the United States," and that his "stated intention to conduct a continuous campaign to disrupt the intelligence operations of the United States" was threatening to do "additional damage of the same kind." The letter told Agee that he had a right to a hearing, in Hamburg, at which the State Department would have to "establish the basis for its action" in revoking his passport.

Agee's lawyer since 1973 has been Melvin Wulf, formerly of the New York Civil Liberties Union and now a law partner of Ramsey Clark. Wulf apparently concluded that a hearing would not be helpful to Agee. They decided instead, as a matter of legal strategy, to challenge the authority of the State Department to issue any regulation whatever of this kind. This strategy meant that Agee's own conduct and its effect on national security would not be an issue.

Wulf promptly filed a lawsuit in federal court in Washington, and the case was assigned to District Judge Gerhard Gesell. Judge Gesell is known among Washington lawyers for his intellect and his innovativeness. Although viewed as liberal, he had ruled against Agee three months earlier in the case brought by the government over the unauthorized disclosures in Agee's book. Still, Wulf took a gamble and conceded the factual charges made by the State Department. He told Judge Gesell at the first court session that "we are attacking the authority of the secretary of state to do this on its face."

The judge expressed concern, particularly since the government's lawyer—trying to avoid a ruling by Gesell—was urging that Agee be required to accept the State Department's offer of a hearing in Hamburg. Judge Gesell then asked Wulf whether he was "prepared to concede that your client is causing or is likely to cause serious damage to the national security." Wulf said yes: "We will concede the charges as they are made in the letter to Agee. . . . Whatever they charge, we will concede it is true."

Thus the question to be decided by all the courts—

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from Judge Gesell up to the Supreme Court—came to be an abstract legal one: does the State Department have the authority to issue and implement a regulation under which a passport of an American citizen is denied or revoked if his activities abroad *concededly* "cause serious damage to the national security or the foreign policy of the United States"? It is firmly established that the executive branch generally has only such powers as the Congress gives it by law. No law enacted by Congress explicitly gives the State Department the authority to revoke passports for national security reasons. So the first question in the *Agee* case was whether the power to publish and carry out such a regulation could be implied from the general authority conferred by Congress (in effect since 1856) "to grant and issue passports . . . under such rules as" the executive branch would promulgate. A second question—potentially more important than the first—was whether such authority, if conferred by Congress, would be constitutional.

THE regulation at the root of the Agee controversy was first published in 1966, and it is ironic that it has now become the target of attack from civil libertarians. When issued, it was part of a long-overdue effort to curtail the freewheeling *ad hoc* passport-lifting of Frances Knight, the autocratic *doyenne* who had ruled the Passport Office since shortly after World War II. Philip Heymann, more recently chief of the Justice Department's Criminal Division under President Carter, was then an assistant secretary of state, with authority over the Passport Office. He wrote the 1966 regulations precisely in order to set limits on the power to refuse, revoke, or limit passports and to establish procedural safeguards for the few instances when drastic action might be justified.

Before 1966, the State Department's regulations imposed no real restraint over the power of the Passport Office—then personified by Knight. Since 1956, the regulations had authorized denial of a passport if a citizen's activities abroad "would be prejudicial to the orderly conduct of foreign relations or otherwise be prejudicial to the interests of the United States." Heymann narrowed the language to require proof of "serious damage" to national security or foreign policy. He also established a formal hearing procedure which made the government responsible for presenting believable evidence to meet this more severe criterion.

But the 1966 regulations were issued under a legal cloud. Eight years earlier, the Supreme Court had ruled that the State Department had no legal authority to deny passports to members of the Communist party. A 1952 regulation had directed that no passports were to be granted to Communist party members or to anyone engaging in "activities which support the Communist movement." Rockwell Kent, the noted artist, was refused a passport under this provision when he wanted to travel to a "peace conference" in Finland. His lawsuit went to the Supreme Court, where Justice William O. Douglas's majority opinion included a lyric tribute to the "liberty" of international travel:

> Freedom of movement across frontiers in either direction, and inside frontiers as well, was a part of our heritage. Travel abroad, like travel within the country, may be necessary for a livelihood. It may be as close to the heart of the individual as the choice of what he eats, or wears, or reads. Freedom of movement is basic in our scheme of values.

In *Kent v. Dulles* the Supreme Court did not go so far as to deem it unconstitutional to deny passports to Communists. It ruled only that when Congress gave the State Department the "broad generalized power" to "grant and issue passports," it was not conferring authority to deny passports to citizens because of their political beliefs or associations.

Agee and his lawyer banked on the *Kent* precedent when they decided to concede that Agee's activities were causing "serious damage to the national security or the foreign policy of the United States." They were confident that, given the *Kent* precedent, a court would have to conclude that the 1966 regulation was no more valid than the 1952 regulation directed at Communists. In the years since *Kent* was decided, Congress had not given the State Department any new power over passport revocation. In fact, it has specifically rejected such proposals.

THE DECISIONS of Judge Gesell and the appeals court seemed to justify Wulf's optimism. Gesell concluded that "the Secretary's promulgation of the challenged regulation was without authorization from Congress." He added that the federal government was not powerless to deal with Agee; if Agee were charged in an indictment with any federal crime, for example, his passport could be canceled. Judge Gesell directed that Agee's passport, having been revoked under an invalid regulation, be restored. The appeals court agreed by a two-to-one vote. The author of the appeals court's majority opinion was Roger Robb, a relatively conservative judge. Judge Robb quoted at length from the Supreme Court's decision in *Kent v. Dulles* and concluded that there was no "express or implied authorization of Congress" for the revocation of an individual's passport on national security grounds. Assuming, as Judge Gesell had done, that the government needed a hand in bringing Agee back, Judge Robb specified that Agee could be indicted for disclosing national defense information to unauthorized individuals—a felony punishable by up to ten years' imprisonment. His passport could then be revoked.

Neither of the two courts addressed the broader question—whether a passport may be *constitutionally* revoked if an individual's activities cause "serious damage" to national security. That question had become hypothetical as a result of the rulings that Congress had granted no such power. And by the time the case had been taken to the Supreme Court by the Justice

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Department, the constitutional issue had dropped nearly out of sight. The government's 57-page brief gave the constitutional question only four and a half pages, and Wulf's constitutional argument began at page 102 of his 125-page brief. The dispute between the parties, as crystallized at the Supreme Court level, was whether the secretary of state over the past two centuries had been refusing or revoking passports to citizens whose travels abroad were thought to jeopardize national security or foreign policy. The Justice Department's argument was that this practice had been followed frequently enough to be known to and implicitly approved by Congress. Agee's lawyer argued that passport refusals or revocations were extremely rare and that they had almost never been based on national security or foreign policy reasons.

By a seven-to-two vote, the Supreme Court agreed with the Justice Department. But the Court did *not* rule (as one might have thought from some reactions in the press) that the secretary of state has broad discretion to deny passports whenever it suits his fancy. In fact, the Court did not even decide whether revocation was justified in Agee's case. It ruled only that denials by the State Department of passports to individual citizens on national security grounds had been "sufficiently substantial and consistent" to have been implicitly approved by Congress.

The Court's opinion admitted that passport denials or revocations for reasons of national security were rare, but it said that "the continued validity of the power is not diluted simply because there is no need to use it." The Court cited, as "the most notable example of enforcement of the administrative policy," a 1948 denial of a passport to a congressman who expressed his intention to travel abroad to support the Greek rebellion, and, as a secondary example, the 1954 denial of a passport to an alleged gun-runner. But the opinion failed to comment on the facts—noted in Agee's brief and never disputed by the Justice Department—that in both of those cases the State Department reversed its decision after being threatened with legal action. In each instance, it issued the passport approximately two weeks after the initial refusal.

IF THE Court had done nothing worse than misread history, the damage would be minimal. Congress is free to deal with the subject of passport revocation and, if prior experience is any guide, it probably will get around to doing so sooner or later. In 1965, applying the same reasoning used in Agee's case, the Supreme Court, speaking through Chief Justice Earl Warren, sustained the State Department's practice of declaring US passports invalid for travel to Cuba. The general authorizing language of the Passport Act was involved in that case, and the question was whether a "substantial and consistent" administrative practice of setting "area restrictions," by which certain countries were embargoed, had been known to Congress and implicitly approved by it. Reciting a long chronology dating back to World War I, the Court ruled that, notwithstanding *Kent v. Dulles*, the State Department had consistently exercised the legal power to declare the passports of all US citizens invalid for travel to designated countries in the interests of foreign policy. In 1978, Congress came around to considering what the law *should* be. It added to the Passport Act language that now permits the State Department to impose area restrictions *only* for "a country with which the United States is at war, where armed hostilities are in progress, or where there is imminent danger to the public health or the physical safety of the United States travelers." By the same token, if there is enough public controversy over the 1966 regulation under which Agee's passport was revoked, Congress surely will limit it with a duly enacted law.

THE MORE lasting harm of the Agee case results from what the court did to the constitutional liberty to travel abroad, to which Justice Douglas paid tribute in *Kent*. The court denied that the right to international travel could withstand the "compelling" interests of national security. This has a drastic impact. Under current law it is unlawful for an American citizen to leave the United States without a valid passport. And because severe penalties are imposed on anyone who transports a US citizen without a passport out of the country, international airlines won't fly passport-less Americans abroad. Anyone who is denied a passport not only loses the "sponsorship" or "protection" of the United States government, but also is barred from traveling altogether, no matter what his personal or private reason for wanting to go.

Forbidding departure from the United States may be a reasonable way of dealing with potential fugitives. Someone charged with a felony or serious crime is required to surrender his passport so that he cannot flee before his trial. If an accused person may be arrested and imprisoned before trial (thereby losing *all* his liberty), he may surely be prevented from leaving the United States. But it is hard to see any justification for withdrawing from any other citizen the official document which is a *sine qua non* for departure from the United States and for travel abroad, even if *some* of his activities abroad have caused or are likely to cause "serious damage" to the national security. Specifically, one may concede that if Philip Agee was planning (which he denies) to travel in Iran in December 1979, the State Department was constitutionally entitled to try to prevent that trip, possibly even by invalidating his passport for that particular voyage. But it was quite another matter for the State Department to take an action which prevented not only Agee's travel to Iran but also a trip to Italy where he was needed to testify in a personal civil suit, a trip to Grenada in March 1980 to participate in an official celebration, his vacation trips in the summer of 1980 through Europe with his family, and his international travels to promote a documentary film critical of the CIA.

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The *Agee* case drove the Supreme Court to distinguish "the *freedom* to travel outside the United States . . . from the *right* to travel within the United States." The Court has ruled that there is a virtually absolute right to travel from one state to another, but the *Agee* decision makes it clear that the Constitution grants no similar right to leave the United States. International travel, said the Court, "can be regulated within the bounds of due process."

This demeans a fundamental freedom which has been recognized in historic declarations from the Magna Carta to the United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Rights. In 1215 King John recognized the right of any person "to go out of our kingdom, and to return." In nearly identical terms, the Universal Declaration recognizes that "Everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country."

There is something about repentant spies that makes them come in for a very cold reception from the Supreme Court. And the constitutional liberties they invoke are the ultimate losers. In February 1980, in the case of Frank Snepp, the Court shook the First Amendment by authorizing draconian enforcement of a censorship agreement imposed on all CIA employees. The constitutional right to free speech has always protected, first and foremost, reports about the operations of government, and the Court has reiterated time and again that the First Amendment prohibits, in all but the most extreme circumstances, any "prior restraint" on publication. Nonetheless, the Court's *Snepp* ruling sustained a system of government preclearance of about-to-be published material concerning a government agency.

The *Agee* case was the first to confront the constitutional question of whether an American citizen who is not accused of a crime could be deprived of a passport and thus denied all ability to travel abroad. Past indications from the Supreme Court were that such drastic action would not be constitutionally acceptable. Yet seven Justices, without seeming to swallow hard, have now relegated international travel to the back of the constitutional bus. It may take a more palatable traveler to inch it forward.

A clash of ignorant armies.

The Humanist Phantom

by Charles Krauthammer

> I should not have any inclination to call myself a humanist, as I think, on the whole, that the non-human part of the cosmos is much more interesting and satisfactory than the human part.
>
> —*Bertrand Russell*

Most of us have only a vague idea what humanism is. We tend to think of a humanist as someone who is concerned with other humans, a humanitarian, an all-around nice guy. For example, that's how Deborah Weisner of Auburn, Maine, sees it. For five days last March she was held hostage on a Pakistani jetliner by armed hijackers. UPI reported that after her release "[she] said that she had sympathized with the terrorists and believed their leader was a 'humanist' until he shot a passenger before her eyes." Now, any definition of humanist that includes a pistol-packing Albert Schweitzer up until the moment he shoots someone dead before your eyes is a broad definition indeed. There used to be a narrower definition. Beginning with the Renaissance and for about 400 years thereafter, the title "humanist" was generally reserved for Greek and Latin scholars and for students of classical forms in art and literature. "In my old-fashioned terminology," wrote George Santayana, "a humanist means a person saturated by the humanities. Humanism is something cultural; an accomplishment, not a doctrine."

Not anymore. If you hold to the Santayana (or the Weisner) view of humanism, you will have difficulty understanding the current hysteria on the religious right over humanism. That is because for the right it has a different meaning. Jesse Helms summarized it neatly: "Basically, we are talking about faith in God versus secular humanism." Note the prefix "secular," the characteristic identifier of this type of humanism and the key to what Reverend Jerry Falwell calls "its satanic influence"—to wit, its atheism. Among evangelicals, secular humanism has become the talk of the tube. Falwell warns that it "challenges every principle on which America was founded. It advocates abortion-on-demand, recognition of homosexuals, free use of pornography, legalizing of prostitution and gambling, and free use of drugs, among other things." Worst

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among these "other things" is that it "promotes the socialization of all humanity into a world commune." Reverend Tim LaHaye, another founder of the Moral Majority and author of its antihumanist bible, *The Battle for the Mind*, is the movement's historian. He explains that humanism "snuck into" America via European rationalists such as Voltaire and now it has become "the most dangerous religion in the world." But Phyllis Schlafly says not to worry. The tide is turning. "The humanists should be worried—because the public has begun to see through their hypocrisy in fastening their atheist ideology on the public schools. . . ."

This is moderate, mainstream antihumanism. For the truly bloodcurdling stuff one has to travel to the deep end of the antihumanist spectrum. Here one finds, among others, pastor Leo Wine of Ashland, Oregon. He did a series of radio programs on humanism. One began with a look at current humanist activities:

> Why are the humanists promoting sexual perversion? Because they want to create such an obsession with sex among our young people that they will have no time or interest for spiritual pursuits. . . . So what do we have? Humanist obsessions: sex, pornography, marijuana, drugs, self-indulgence, rights without responsibility.

Then he panned upward for the larger overview:

> Humanists control America. America is supposed to be a free country, but are we really free? . . . Now the humanist organizations—ACLU, AHA [American Humanist Association]—control the television, the radio, the newspapers, the Hollywood movies, magazines, porno magazines, and the unions, the Ford Foundation, Rockefeller Foundation. . . .They, 275,000 humanists, have infiltrated until every department of our country is controlled by the humanists.

And they have plans for the future:

> Humanists will continue leading us toward the chaos of the French Revolution. After all, it is the same philosophy that destroyed France and paved the way for the dictator Napoleon Bonaparte. This time the humanists hope to name their own dictator who will create out of the ashes of our pro-moral republic a humanist utopia, an atheistic, socialistic, amoral humanist society for America and the rest of the world. In fact, their goal is to accomplish that takeover by or before the year 2000.

drawing by Harry Pincus for *The New Republic*

Nor is the fear of secular humanism restricted to paranoid pastors, television hucksters, or Moral Majoritarians trying to drum up converts and donations. When the Southern Baptist Convention met in Los Angeles last June, the *New York Times* reported blandly that it "approved resolutions condemning pornography, anti-Semitism and secular humanism. . . ." Interesting company. The resolution "encourage[s] Baptists to become informed about and voice opposition to the tenets of secular humanism" and calls for an educational effort to "explain the nature and inherent danger of secular humanism."

The antihumanist campaign also has found its way into the classroom. Schoolboards throughout the country evaluate textbooks based on the critique of Educational Research Analysts, a textbook reviewing outfit that is a Geiger counter for humanist contamination. It is run by a retired Texas couple, Mel and Norma Gabler. In 1979 the *American School Board Journal* cited them as perhaps the two most powerful individuals in American education. The current issue of *Moral Majority Report* hails them as an inspiration to those "who think there is little they can do to fight the humanism that increasingly dominates public education." In that same issue, Mel (who refers to the public schools as "government seminaries" of secular humanism) candidly lists the kinds of humanist influence he ferrets for in textbooks: situation ethics, self-centeredness, evolution, negations of Christianity, death edu-

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Antihumanism on the air

The radio preachers start talking at dawn and continue with numbing intensity far into the night. More than a million Americans faithfully tune in to their 15-minute concoctions of fire and brimstone, dulcet-toned pleading, right-wing ideology, and born-again religion. And with the advent of the "new right" and the growing sophistication of groups like the Moral Majority, radio evangelists can no longer be dismissed as representing a politically and culturally meaningless fringe. Currently there are more than 1,300 radio stations nationwide with extensive religious programming that reaches as many as 115 million listeners a week. The number of religious stations is increasing at a rate of two per week.

Most religious stations are profit-making ventures. Air time is sold to the independent ministries that produce and distribute programs. Preachers make frequent pitches for contributions. For nationally syndicated programs, the goal is to generate enough revenue through local contributions to be self-sustaining in each market.

In the Washington, DC, area, two stations broadcast more than 70 programs every day. WFAX went into the religious radio business in 1948. WABS ("We Always Broadcast Salvation") changed from an all-news format four years ago. To get an idea of the flavor of what the religious stations broadcast, I recently spent several days listening to the two Washington outlets. What I heard says a great deal about the kinds of issues that are galvanizing the religious right.

"Ask the Pastor" presents modern marriage as a grim struggle resulting from the unwillingness of many women to accept God's laws. "Part of the judicial decree of God in response to the sin that Eve committed was to place her in subordination to her husband," Pastor Andy Christianson says, citing appropriate Scripture. "Sometimes women rebel, and this is called womens' liberation." Brother Roloff covers child rearing. His theme is corporal punishment. (His enthusiasm for physical punishment as the best disciplinary method also guides his Lighthouse home for errant children and has embroiled him in a legal battle with the Texas attorney general.) "No Christian," he reassures listeners, "will beat a child until he maims him or cripples him or kills him. Love will always stop him at the proper time. A child needs enough punishment to break his stubborn will and let him throw up the white flag and say 'Daddy, you win, I surrender.' "

After a chorus of "My Country, 'Tis of Thee," Dr. Vernon Schroeder articulates a theme that is no longer rare on born-again radio, though it runs counter to the traditional fundamentalist respect for civil law. Shroeder advocates a kind of civil disobedience based on a view of the Bible as inerrant and absolute. He tells his audience that God's law always takes precedence over civil law, especially in this age of abortion, birth control, homosexuality, and the assorted ungodly laws of unrighteous men. "The time is coming, my friends, when we will be forced to make a decision whether we will deny God and obey civil government, or deny civil government and obey God. . . . In a few short hours, we will be thrust under the hand of godless government regulations, and then we must make our decision."

Old-time radio preachers such as Dale Crowley, who has been broadcasting the Gospel and chasing evolutionists for half a century, still condemn the social gospel, the liberal notion that churches should work to redeem society through the broad ethical principles of Christianity. But the new radio evangelists have been forced to rename the enemy, since they have come to assume the role of social redeemers themselves. "They're using 'secular humanism' as a kind of updated term for the social gospel," says William Fore, director of communications for the National Council of Churches, another favorite target of fundamentalist broadcasters. "Humanism is second only to communism as a scare word." On his program, Vernon Shroeder calls humanism "anti-God and anti-Christ." On the "Family Freedom Hour," Pastor Brothers portrays it as a sinister, well-organized conspiracy especially designed to influence young people. The *Humanist Manifesto*, he says, lists its goals: atheism, birth control, abortion, free sexual choice, and world government.

Several other groups are favorite targets. Planned Parenthood is excoriated almost hourly for advocating the same sins as the humanists, in addition to more traditional sins such as bestiality and incest. Homosexuals fare no better. One caller on the daily talk show on WABS reads selections from the Bible that seem to advocate the execution of homosexuals. And the radio ministries are doing what they can to boost the anti-evolution revival. Theories of evolution, according to Pastor Carver on the "Christian-Jew Hour," are part of the "doctrine of Demons." Several ministers ridicule the idea that their listeners' ancestors might have been apes or "blobs." Jerry Falwell calls evolution the "cornerstone of secular humanism."

Jews are treated with ambivalence on evangelical radio, but programs are aimed more at reinforcing the commitments of converted Jews than at making new converts. Often they are described as members of an obdurate, misguided race. "To my Jewish friends, I say this: you blew it 2,000 years ago," thunders Brother Shambock. On the "Christian-Jew Hour," the tone is patient and condescending. Sermons are loaded with biblical quotes showing Jews—and Catholics, Mormons, and vegetarians—the error of their ways.

cation, internationalism, and sexual freedom.

The antihumanists have even made several forays, with mixed results, into the political arena. In 1976 Representative John Conlan of Arizona introduced an amendment to withhold federal funds for any educational activity involving "the religion of humanism." Conlan lost on the House floor, but he did get the House to cut off funding for an entire public school curriculum entitled "Man: A Course of Study" (man, for reasons unrelated to feminism, being the offending concept). This year a suit was filed in California to force the public schools to teach the "creationist" rebuttal to evolution. The plaintiffs lost, but shortly thereafter Arkansas passed a law mandating equal time for creationism in the public schools. Jesse Helms's human life amendment and Roger Jepsen's

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But to the millenialists who dominate the religious airwaves (the James Watt view of an abbreviated earthly future is taken as a given), the repopulation of modern Israel with unconverted Jews is the key event in their prophesies of the rapture that will precede the imminent return of Christ. The messianic Jews focus on the ways in which Jews can accept Christ as the Messiah prophesied in the Old Testament and still retain their cultural identity. The messianic programs are sprinkled with Yiddish words, Hasidic-sounding music with Christian lyrics, and personal testimonies in which earnest young converts document the spiritual poverty of growing up Jewish.

Born-again radio emphasizes that Christians should strive to divorce themselves from a sinful society. The leader of a Washington-area Baptist youth group tells the audience the qualities he tries to instill in children: being saved, surrendering to God, being soul winners, studying the Bible, and separation. "We want our young people to be separated from the world," he says firmly. Genuine Christians are portrayed as a long-suffering minority who pay at every turn for their convictions. As radio preachers shed the fundamentalist distrust of politics, they increasingly come to portray themselves as moral crusaders who are bound together, at least in part, by the perceived hostility of the outside world.

No broadcaster uses this concept more effectively than Jerry Falwell, guiding light of the Moral Majority, whose "Old Time Gospel Hour" is broadcast on 389 TV and 450 radio stations nationwide. Real Christians, Falwell says, inevitably will be controversial and unpopular figures in this troubled time. He invokes a long list of evils: abortion, George McGovern, the ACLU, political and religious liberalism, homosexuality, divorce, and sex education—"academic pornography," he calls it. Christians who take the correct positions on these moral dilemmas, he suggests, must be willing to suffer. "The right stands," he says, "are the difficult ones." The theme of persecution by the forces of unrighteousness—liberal clergymen, politicians, and bureaucrats—works its way into his plea for funds. "Satan," he intones, "would love to silence the voice of the 'Old Time Gospel Hour.' "

The daily talk shows on WABS provide an opportunity for listeners to express their own righteous anger. One caller describes the 29 things the Communists are doing to overthrow our "Christian" nation. "Sex education," she says, "is done deliberately to destroy the minds of American youth and destroy their ruggedness." Other callers describe Ernest Lefever, Jesse Helms, and South Africa as staunch defenders of the Christian faith and accuse unnamed public officials of being homosexuals. Surprisingly few callers fit stereotypes of the backwoods fundamentalist. They are generally articulate and well read in current politics. But facts are reshaped to fit into rigid politico-religious schemes. When a caller suggests that most of the Soviet Union's space satellites are really orbiting warheads, and another argues that the Ku Klux Klan is merely a victim of the liberal press, no one disagrees. "You're not giving me the facts as I like to hear them," a caller tells a guest on one edition of the program.

The programs are a smashing success with their audiences. Chaplain Ray "wins criminals from crime to Christ" through his prison radio ministry. Marilyn Hickey, in a kind of hyperkinetic baby talk, says that "Jesus can be your pain deadener and disinfectant." Pastor Epley's services reverberate with the wails of the afflicted and the shouted praise of those who witness his diagnoses and cures. David Weber warns that zip codes, Social Security numbers, and government computers are among the tools the Antichrist will soon use to identify his followers, who have been marked with the number 666. Already, he says, uniform product codes on food packages contain the dangerous digits.

The high-pitched vehemence of many radio preachers contrasts sharply with the new wave of slick, toned-down television ministries. The nationally telecast "700 Club" is more reminiscent of the "Tonight Show" than of steamy rural Pentecostal churches. The television ministers, because they emphasize the proselytizing function, have repackaged fundamentalism to sell to a broader market. The radio preachers focus instead on the already-saved. And because they are not concerned about impressing the non-fundamentalist world, they probably reflect more accurately the feelings of the foot soldiers in this growing army of the righteous.

The religious right is fragmented into many factions, each claiming moral purity, each interpreting the absolute word of God in a different way. On the surface, nothing seems more unlikely than a stable coalition of such diverse groups. But a coalition *has* developed which tolerates major doctrinal differences as long as there is agreement about certain highly charged symbolic issues. Radio preachers may quibble about the chronology of Armageddon, but increasingly they agree about the political advantages of focusing on issues such as sex education, homosexuality, humanism, and evolution. They often express their satisfaction with the rising conservative tide, and their determination to help direct the current. Jerry Falwell sums up the basic tenet that has, for the moment, unified the electronic evangelists: "One man and his God," he says, "constitute a majority."

James David Besser

James David Besser is a Washington, DC, writer.

omnibus Family Protection Act are guaranteed to carry on the antihumanist crusade in Congress.

What is behind all the rending of garments over secular humanism? Clearly, for Falwell and Company, humanism does not mean humanitarianism or a love of Greek poetry (though he might have some reservations about that, too). It is a handy catchall to evoke all the changes of the postwar American cultural revolution: challenges to traditional sexual morality, civil and parental authority, and religious orthodoxy; to work, family, neighborhood, and church, as Ronald Reagan puts it. Ultimately, it is a reaction to a decline in religious values. Now, there is nothing particularly new or necessarily dangerous about conservatives opposing secularization and calling for a religious renewal. What *is* new, and potentially dangerous, is that the

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current reaction has identified a single cause for the secular trend and dubbed it humanism. This poses a logical problem. If humanism simply means irreligion, then to blame the decline of religion on the rise of humanism is a tautology. On the other hand, if humanism is the evangelical creed of a small band of proselytizing zealots, then to blame the decline of religion on humanism is paranoia. The religious right, apparently, has chosen paranoia. It is a clever tactic. What otherwise would have been a shadowy struggle against a 500-year-old historical trend—secularization—is transformed into a crusade against a militant ideology controlled by a vanguard of party activists—the humanists. A generation ago the pernicious sappers of our vital spiritual juices were called "godless Communists." Now they are "secular humanists."

WHO ARE these people hiding under (in?) the beds of God-fearing Christians? There is in fact an organization of humanists, but they are hardly a group on whom to pin the decline of Western civilization. Forty years ago they banded together into the American Humanist Association. They then proceeded to wander in the same political wilderness as the militant vegetarians and agrarian anarchists. It took the far right to put them on the map.

A glance at the current issue of the *Humanist*, the American Humanist Association's magazine, gives a good idea of what they are up to. The cover story is "Humanistic Revolution in Health Care," a paean to the Pritikin diet. It is followed by articles on sexual equality, genetic altruism, the makings of a good person, and the like. The *Humanist* would be indistinguishable from other publications promoting good causes except for several unnerving characteristics. First, it has a consistent strain of gratuitous antitheism which endows each piece with a triumphant "God-is-really-dead" tone. In this issue, for example, an article describing a politician's fight with the local Catholic hierarchy over birth control is entitled "The Man Who Defeated God." Second, a slightly crackpot secular millenarianism prevails. There is the promise of salvation in every new discovery, scientific or social: if only the Pritikin diet were accepted, 150,000 lives a year would be saved; or, if only we had sexual equality, we would have the "key to solving such globe-threatening problems as nuclear war, totalitarianism, and social injustice all across the board." That same spirit compels the almost obsessive habit of ending each article with an uplifting reference to all humankind, a kind of humanist hallelujah.

It is difficult, however, to make such benign eccentricities the object of a holy war. For the religious right to sustain its malevolent fantasies about humanism, it turns not to today's *Humanist* but instead to a more venerable source, the *Humanist Manifesto*, I and II. The first of these was issued in 1933 and signed by 34 intellectuals (John Dewey was one). Its object was not to reject religion but to replace the traditional creeds with a new one: "religious humanism." It was to be the "vital, fearless and frank religion" that new realities demanded. By today's standards the manifesto is a mild, naive affirmation of faith in science, reason, and "manly attitudes." It rejects the traditional belief in God and calls for man to create his own ethics; it rejects "acquisitive and profit-motivated society" and calls for a "socialized and cooperative economic order" with "the equitable distribution of the means of life." The content is vaguely Marxist, humane and minus the class antagonism. But the pretentions of the 15 numbered principles are decidedly biblical. Take humanist principle number one: "religious humanists regard the universe as self-existing and not created." This statement tells us nothing about the universe, since "self-existing," though the kind of word that might inspire an Escher painting, is philosophically empty. It is a thinly disguised declaration about (the nonexistence of) He-who-is-supposed-to-have-created-the-universe, a politely humanist way of saying that in the beginning God did *not* create the heavens and the earth.

FORTY YEARS later the *Humanist Manifesto* began to look a bit dated. So a sequel—*Humanist Manifesto* II—was produced. By now there were many more signers. They included biomedical types like Francis Crick and B. F. Skinner; philosophers like Sidney Hook; civil liberty lobbyists like the heads of Planned Parenthood and the Association for the Repeal of Abortion Laws; and liberal—very liberal—churchmen, mostly Unitarians with a rabbi thrown in here and there. By now, the pretense that humanism was a new religion or in any way "religious" was dropped. The new manifesto was frankly antireligious, although it did, with Christian charity, concede that "traditional religions are surely not the only obstacles to human progress." All the hallmarks of the old humanism are there: a naive faith in science ("We need to extend the uses of scientific method . . . to build constructive social and moral values"); a rejection of God ("We find insufficient evidence for belief in the existence of a supernatural," $p > 0.05$, no doubt, or, for you lawyers, case dismissed); the enshrinement of "self-actualization" as the goal of life; the assertion that ethics is "autonomous and situational needing no theological sanction"; an attack on orthodox religion for "unduly repress[ing] sexual conduct"; an affirmation of the right to birth control, abortion, and permission to express "sexual proclivities" and pursue "lifestyles"; and a definition of civil liberties that includes "the right to die with dignity, euthanasia and the right to suicide." In keeping with the fashion of the times, a few new clichés are appended: a commitment to decentralized decision-making, a salute to "the energy and idealism of the young," an appeal for "a world order based upon transnational federal government," and bows to ecology and a new world economic order for the third world. All in all, a mixture of old-fashioned earnest

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atheism and late-1960s radical libertarianism, floating in a gelatinous universalism worthy of a UN preamble. It is the creed one might expect of a socially conscious, passionately naive microbiology major.

Neither *Humanist Manifesto* made a great impact. The 1933 version might have served the already religiously defrocked as a benign, mildly socialist alternative to Stalinism; the 1973 version, as a highly scientistic corrective to some of the neo-romantic irrationalism of the late-1960s. Today's tepid *Humanist* magazine reflects the same sensibilities. And it shares the same intellectual marginality. It remains an enthusiastic, slightly utopian, and doggedly atheistic forum for a small group of believers. But that's not how its opponents see it. They see these humanists and their manifestos marching across the centuries leaving devastation in their wake. Recently, Alabama removed from its approved list of school texts a history book which parental groups claimed promoted secular humanist values. One complaint was about a reference to Erasmus as a "Christian humanist." One critic asked: "How can a Christian be a humanist? . . . It is impossible to be a Christian humanist. . . . If you embrace the humanist manifesto, you embrace that there is no God."

THE ENTIRE evangelical attack on the humanist nemesis is at roughly the same level of sophistication. And the saddest consequence of this crazy crusade is that it has corrupted an important social issue: what happens to a free society when a major source of its values—religion—declines? Conservatives are not the only ones who are troubled by this question. Arthur Schlesinger once wrote that "the most important thing for the preservation of civilization is a belief in moral standards. That belief is really most solid when it is founded upon a fervent belief in a supernatural order." Years later he added,

> I am impressed, for example, by the way the declining faith in the supernatural has been accompanied by the rise of the monstrous totalitarian creeds of the 20th century. As Chesterton once said, 'The trouble when people stop believing in God is not that they thereafter believe in nothing; it is that they thereafter believe in anything.'

Schlesinger is not the first to appreciate the political and social functions of religious belief. As Terry Eastland points out (*Commentary*, June 1981), the founding fathers held a similar view. They recognized that individual liberty alone was insufficient for sustaining a republican order. For society to remain intact, the centrifugal forces of simple libertarianism had to be balanced by countervailing forces promoting civic and moral virtue. Respect for the gods and the *polis* provided that for the Greeks. The founding fathers believed that the prevailing Protestant culture, with its belief in Divine Providence, would do the same for America.

But that religious order has declined. In intellectual circles today, a belief in the supernatural is treated with condescension if not contempt. Several years ago the great Australian neurobiologist, Sir John Eccles, ended a Harvard lecture on brain organization by admitting that although evolution could account for the brain, it could not, in his view, account for the mind, with its mysterious capacity for consciousness and thought: only something transcendent could account for that. The audience began hissing.

IN THE scientific world, to insist on the need for a religious sensibility is considered a lapse of judgment; in the political world, it is considered a retreat to sentimentality if not reaction. But in my view it is a mistake to assume that rejecting the lunacy of the far right means we must deny the value to society of a religious sensibility. The connection between decline in spirituality and social pathology has been noted by Schlesinger. And it has been argued most forcefully not by Jerry Falwell but by Alexander Solzhenitsyn. In his fire and brimstone Harvard address of 1978 Solzhenitsyn ascribed the present "state of weakness of the West" to:

> . . . the prevailing view of the world which was first born during the Renaissance and found its political expression from the period of the Enlightenment . . . rationalistic humanism or humanistic autonomy: the proclaimed and enforced autonomy of man from any higher force above him. . . . [This] anthropocentricity, with man seen as the center of everything that exists . . . did not admit the existence of intrinsic evil in man nor did it see any higher task than the attainment of happiness on earth. . . . That provided access for evil of which in our days there is a free and constant flow.

Solzhenitsyn does not engage in the easy demagoguery of the American right in blaming our current condition on a small band of satanic conspirators. When Solzhenitsyn speaks of humanism, his definition is the only honest and useful one: the doctrine of man-centeredness which has characterized half a millenium of Western thought. And when Solzhenitsyn denounces this doctrine and calls for a return to the spiritual fold, he knows he is ordering the tides to turn back. But that is not his only message. We don't have to will ourselves into his idealized theistic past to appreciate his warnings against anthropocentric arrogance—against an insufficient appreciation of man's capacity for evil and, therefore, of the dangers of absolute freedom. Most of us are not prepared to learn our theology from Solzhenitsyn. But that is not a reason to reject his message about the limits of liberty and the need to reestablish—in our law and politics and culture—communal values. Restoring these values is a task secularists and skeptics should address without fear that it will put them on the road to Lourdes, or to Lynchburg, Virginia. Ignoring these values simply guarantees that they will remain the exclusive domain of comically dogmatic manifesto signers and dangerously intolerant twice-born preachers.

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Books and the Arts

Stanley Kauffmann on films

The Bard of Avondale

It's 25 years anyway since I first saw the title of a poem that seems to me the best poetic title since *The Divine Comedy*. The poem is called "Not Waving But Drowning." The poet is an Englishwoman named Stevie Smith, and, yes, the poem itself is good, too. The last two of its 12 lines:

> I was much too far out all my life
> And not waving but drowning.

Of course I read more Smith—her collected poems are published by Oxford University Press—and got the sense of an English Emily Dickinson: lesser, certainly, but certainly comparable.

In 1977 I read London reviews of a play called *Stevie* (she had died in 1971), arranged from her life and writings by Hugh Whitemore, and I restrained a youthful impulse to fly the Atlantic at once. Later I read that the play had been filmed with two of the London principals, but the film didn't come here. Then, in 1979, the Manhattan Theater Club, off Broadway, presented the play in a good production directed by Brian Murray with a cast headed by Roberta Maxwell. It was lackadaisically received and soon disappeared. I do not slight this sensitive production when I say I'm glad that the film has at last arrived.

The film is the play minimally embellished, so it's primary to make the shape of the play clear. Four characters only: Stevie, her aunt, a boyfriend who appears in one flashback scene, and a character called The Man. The last is chorus as well as character: he often speaks to us, introducing people and explaining transitions, and he also occasionally steps "into" the play. (I surmise that he is based on James MacGibbon, an English publishing figure, who wrote the introduction to the collected edition.) Stevie, too, often speaks directly to us, just as easily as she speaks to others on stage, simply by looking at us. (The aunt and the boyfriend remain "within" the play.) In the film, the "us" is of course the camera. This is hardly a new device, but in serious work, it's always a bit risky. It can smell of false naiveté, treating the technology of production and the pastness of the film as if they didn't exist—a risk that doesn't apply in the relatively untechnological, present-tense theater.

But that risk never bothers *Stevie*, and not just because the writing is so limber and the address to the audience so uncoy. It's because the presence of the audience is taken absolutely for granted. That acceptance is no mere dramaturgic device: it involves metaphysical truth about Stevie herself. It's as if our presence had always been part of the woman's life. What the audience was in the theater, what the camera is here, is the witness that every artist needs to perceive all his secrets whole, secrets that even his nearest and dearest cannot wholly see. The art that comes finally is the externalizing of only some of those secrets: all of them need witness. (Somewhere Auden said that, when he arrives in Heaven, God will walk toward him speaking lines of the poems he never wrote.) Stevie says firmly that she is an agnostic. This is relevant to the method of the play and the film. A devout believer wouldn't need to address *us* so much, she would have a witness of all her secrets.

None of this is to say that *Stevie* is grand. It's a small film about a small-scale poet who, by temperamental choice, led a suburban life outside London. Born in 1902 as Florence Margaret Smith, called Peggy by her aunt, she was nicknamed Stevie because, when riding, someone thought she looked like the jockey Steve Donahue. She commuted most of her life to a job in a magazine publishing firm in central London and lived in a row house with her adored aunt from the Midlands. (The aunt's name is never given: Stevie refers to her as "the lion of Hull" or "the lion aunt.") There were only a few variants between Stevie and the other inhabitants of Avondale Road. First, she was physically very exhaustible. She had spent three years in a tuberculosis sanitorium as a child, and all her life she fluctuated between exhaustion and ebullience. (Once, depressed, she slashed her wrists.) Another difference from the neighbors: she wrote. In fact her first book was a novel, *Novel on Yellow Paper*, and she wrote two more; but it was her poetry that quietly achieved some quiet fame; brought her broadcasts on the BBC (George Orwell, whom she distrusted, was her producer); won her the Queen's Medal in 1969. (Her account of her visit to Buckingham Palace is perfect: awed but witty.) On the whole, however, the suburban ambience, with the tea waiting in the consciously cozy living room, the Tio Pepe shared with the lion aunt before dinner, the confined and *understood* little Avondale Road life, was Stevie's clear preference over the metropolitan literary life she could easily have chosen.

That suburban environment, loved, is one part of the drama: because it contrasts with the immensity of spirit in

Films Worth Seeing

Breaker Morant. Still widely available. Australian film of Boer War court-martial opens no new dramatic or moral ground but is excellently made.

Bustin' Loose. Just an excuse to see Richard Pryor. Well, almost any excuse will do.

The Four Seasons. Alan Alda and five other comic pros give exceptional zest to this super TV sitcom that Alda wrote and directed.

Richard's Things. Liv Ullmann and a welcome newcomer named Amanda Redman as a widow and her dead husband's mistress who become lovers. Their acting gives this English film a depth not in the script.

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Mona Washbourne and Glenda Jackson in *Stevie*.

this particular commuter. Within the overdecorated little house, with its fake Burne-Jones drawings, great wings are beating in one suburbanite bosom. Avondale Road is, after all, not so far from Keats's Hampstead, and if there'd been a camera and recorder on hand at the time, we might have heard *him* wavering between mint sauce and red currant jelly for his roast lamb. The film, even more than the play, gives us the godlike sense of looking down into one tiny mortal dwelling to discern the immortality within it.

Whitemore's method is pastiche: of chronicle, dialogue, soliloquy, and many seamlessly spliced bits of Stevie's poetry. We follow her from early middle age through her aunt's death to her own disintegration via brain tumor. The drama is chiefly in the fact that *a drama is being shown*: the contrast between the quiet living of a life and the fact of its presentation to us.

So far as we are told, there was only one amour in Stevie's life, one engagement, and she broke that off because she couldn't brook the idea of a married Stevie. (Also, during her night of love with her gent, played by Alec McCowen, he asked her—as she reminds him the next day—whether she was enjoying it. Not only that, she says: he actually asked, "Are you enjoying it, *dear*?") She tells us later that she's a friendship girl, not the marrying kind: "I love people, but I love the thought and memory of them just as much."

Possibly the subtlest aspect of the piece is its language, which mirrors the double suburban-cosmic perspective of the shape. It combines the platitudinous with the piercing. Some unmemorable observations, such as life being like a railway station, and insights like "We've all got to go sometime" are mixed with lines like the above and fragments of her poetry. ("Unique and cheerfully gruesome," Robert Lowell thought it.) When she talks about Anglicanism, there's more binary structure: she likes the hymns but doesn't like the faith. And Glenda Jackson, who plays Stevie, always gives the word "Christian" three syllables—Christ-i-an. This makes the source of the term stand clear.

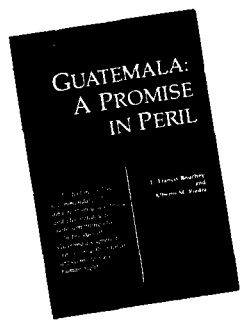
About Jackson's acting, I have little to add to what I've said many times: she is one of the best actresses alive. When she enters a room, the room then exists. Her intelligence, her concealment and revelation of feeling, her musicality . . . but I wasn't going to talk about her. I'll just note that I was glad to see her with her 1978 "normal" hair instead of the shingle cut she subsequently adopted for Shakespeare's Cleopatra in London and her Broadway appearance in *Rose*.

Jackson did Stevie on the London stage, and with her as the lion aunt was Mona Washbourne, who is with her again in the film. In all the shouting, so well deserved, about Jackson, please, please let us not overlook Washbourne. This is fine character acting by a fine character actress at the apex of a long career: exquisitely controlled, beautifully selected, timed impeccably, utterly inhabited. See her in the doorway when Stevie is helped out of a taxi after her suicide attempt. See her—after her earlier scenes of marcelled hair and perfect composure—as illness encroaches, in her dressing gown, with one loose tendril of hair, making her way fearfully to her easy chair. It's an actor's poem about the passage of time.

Trevor Howard is The Man. Howard has become mostly a hearty old blunderbuss of an actor, but here he has a chance to recapture some of the range and color he used to have. It is he, walking by a pond one day, who speaks the "Not Waving But Drowning" poem. I wish I had a recording of it.

The director is the American-born Robert Enders who has been writing and producing in England since 1972. With Jackson he co-produced the excellent film of Genet's *The Maids* (*TNR*, May 3, 1975) and has since made several other pictures. *Stevie* is Enders's directing debut, and he does well. The only cinematic contrivances come when he "breaks out" of the house into outdoor sequences—like the mimed sequences of Stevie's childhood—to avoid theater contrivance. And I wish he had omitted the drawing of the curtain on the lighted window of the aunt's bedroom to signify her death. Other than

Evolution or Revolution in Guatemala?



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that, high marks for fluency.

The music by Patrick Gowers, played by the Gabrieli String Quartet and the guitarist John Williams, gives the right reticent richness to this *multum in parvo* film. Babs Grey's costumes have the precise touches of English propriety (the aunt) and ignoring of chic (Stevie)—though I confess I missed the gray wool ankle socks and open-toed bright green sandals that Roberta Maxwell wore in the New York production. The film was shot by Freddie Young, who later did *Richard's Things*, discussed here four weeks ago. Young was a mere 76 when he photographed *Stevie*, but still managed precociously to lay lovely sepia on the past and to make the modern suburban interiors both crinkum-crankum and endearing.

Robert Brustein on theater

The Legacy of the Group Theater

Following the death of Harold Clurman last year, the thoughts of those concerned about serious American dramatic expression inevitably began to turn to the Group Theater—the seminal company he helped to found in 1931—and how it both influenced and reflected the fate of later theater collectives with similar ambitions. Clurman's passionate account of the Group's history, *The Fervent Years*, was written in 1945, but it is still our most penetrating analysis of the relationship between theater and society; it is also a prophetic glimpse into the obstacles facing any collaborative effort in a country without a genuine commitment to the arts.

The most curious thing about Clurman's melancholy chronicle is that, while the Group is traditionally discussed as if it were a unique theatrical success, the author proceeds always on the assumption that it was a disappointing failure. Indeed, in his 1957 preface, Clurman refers to criticism of his "negative" and "self-deprecating" tone by friends and associates, particularly Irwin Shaw, who remarked that "the Group Theater was a glorious crusade, not a funeral." Clurman hardly slights the signal achievements of his theater: the development of an indigenous American acting technique based on Stanislavsky; the creation of a powerful acting ensemble with a unified realistic style; the championing of lively social-minded playwrights, including Clifford Odets, John Howard Lawson, and William Saroyan; and, not least of all, the capacity to survive in a depressed society for ten years with most of the Group's ideals intact. Still, I believe Clurman was correct in perceiving that, in some deeper way, the group did fail to realize its original intentions. The reasons he gives are an indictment less of the Group than of the social and theatrical milieu in which it was forced to function.

In common with all such American efforts, the Group's most nagging and pervasive problem was financial. The basic aesthetic of the company was related to a sense of continuity; yet productions were continually being canceled, actors laid off, and seasons shortened, as a result of a shortage of funds. It would be inconceivable, in any other country, for such a distinguished ensemble to be hobbled by economic constraints, but money was always raised, as Clurman wrote, "in dribs and drabs for individual productions. Never was any substantial sum set aside at one time for a carefully planned program on a long-term or at least a season basis." It was not the purpose of the Group to put on shows, but rather to build a theater, one which would develop both its own artists and its own audience in order to "grow with the years and make a contribution to our social-cultural life in the manner of certain State theaters abroad." Without an endowment, however, or dependable support, the Group was forced to operate continually on the hit-or-miss system that characterizes Broadway, measuring the run of its plays by box-office receipts and critical reception. To rehearse a play for eight or nine weeks and then to close it after eight performances was the source of Clurman's and the company's most dispirited moments—especially when the canceled work (including two or three by Odets) was among those the Group believed in most.

The Group, therefore, was mired in the commercial system when all its instincts lay elsewhere. Still, as a permanent ensemble, the company was sometimes able to keep a play in its repertory that might otherwise have been destroyed by a perfunctory, thoughtless review. Such was the case with Odets's *Awake and Sing*, which Brooks Atkinson of the *New York Times* had not much liked when it first appeared, but which, upon revival, he praised highly. (When Atkinson thereupon asked whether the play had changed, Clurman replied, "No, you have!") This change of mind inspired Clurman to write:

> Now when no one ever mentions the possibility or desirability of a repertory theater, it might be pointed out that there can hardly be any true theater culture without it, since most judgments in the theater are as spotty and shortsighted as those Mr. Atkinson confessed. Indeed, the judgment of any work of art on the basis of a single hasty contact would be as frivolous as most theater opinion.

BUT THE CAPACITY to resurrect worthy plays after hostile notices was among the very few advantages the Group could claim under these self-limiting commercial restraints. The company, for example, never produced a classic—despite its love of Chekhov and its long-postponed plan to do *The Three Sisters* in a new version by Odets—because, as Clurman explained, "a first-class production of a classic can hardly be financed in New York without the support of a star name." Even the choice of new plays was sometimes influenced by what the directorship believed would excite the box office. "The basic defect in our activity," Clurman wrote, "was that while we tried to maintain a true policy artistically, we proceeded economically on a show business basis. Our means and our ends were in fundamental contradiction."

Subject to malign external pressures, the Group also buckled internally. The greatest threat to the nuclear stability of the company was the magnetic attraction of Hollywood. Clurman's attitude toward defections in the ranks of the Group was outwardly benevolent (he once spent a six-month period in Hollywood himself), but he was not very happy when the most talented members of his company were continually lured away, whether permanently or for short periods, by the promise of money and fame, and the chance to marry a movie star. The first to leave

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was Franchot Tone, followed soon after by Odets, John Garfield, Stella Adler, and most of the others. All had strong feelings for the company and argued constantly over its policy; all had accepted pitifully small wages and even small parts for the sake of a unified ensemble. But in the long run, there was no adhesive strong enough to keep the Group together on a truly permanent basis. Clurman was gradually coming to perceive that "the Group's situation was an impossible one, that we were carrying on a task that was almost against nature! . . . My idealism did not preclude my seeing that in a very real sense we were fools."

After the Group collapsed, Clurman saw the problem through a wider social perspective:

> For a group to live a healthy life and mature to a full consummation of its potentiality, it must be sustained by other groups—not only of moneyed men or civic support, but by equally conscious groups in the press, in the audience, and generally in large and comparatively stable segments of society. When this fails to happen, regardless of its spirit or capacities, it will wither. . . .

Quoting Robert Ardrey, he amplified this further: "The Group was destined to fail . . . because its premise went against the American grain. The Group aimed to cultivate the individual through a collective discipline and a collective approach to the individual's problems; and America's culture is fundamentally individualistic." No one read eulogies or sang dirges over the corpse of the Group, partly because it never officially announced its own death, partly because few recognized at the time what had been lost. The dissolution of what was indisputably the finest company of actors ever to have been gathered together in America was, in fact, received with a certain "glee" by "the divisive forces of the New York theater," as Clurman called them, "which through indifference, casualness, need for excitement, malice, and a miserable competitiveness dog the coherence and stability of all organic effort."

The artistic achievements of the Group Theater, no matter how substantial, are not what have ensured its place in theater history. Few of the plays it produced, not even those of Odets, were really of first-class quality, and great ensemble acting is too ephemeral to create a permanent impression on a culture. The offspring of the Group all ended up on Broadway or in Hollywood, or in the Actors Studio training for Broadway or Hollywood. No, what was great and lasting about the Group was its idea—and an unremitting devotion to that idea on the part of Clurman and some of his colleagues. The Group defined the terms on which a serious American theater henceforth would be approached, and identified the conditions that would prevent such a theater from enjoying a healthy life.

Alas, those conditions are unchanged, and Clurman's diagnosis remains as accurate today as when it was written 26 years ago. What is also the same, however, is an impulse Clurman recognized—the motivating quality of the Group—which suggests that however "against nature" such an activity might be, there is something fundamentally natural about it too. It is the compulsion, in our lonely, isolating world, to discover community, to identify like-minded people, to create something precious that is not entirely personal and private. The hunger of the American individual, Clurman wrote in his concluding chapter, "for a cooperative interdependence [which is what I mean by the term "collective"] is slowly becoming greater than his slogans of self-preservation and self-aggrandizement. He begins to realize that his competitive sense tends to kill off not only his competitor but himself." Clurman is talking here about the social ideal, and if it seems even more distant today than in 1945, it is still not entirely dead as a realizable goal. Clurman and the Group kept it alive by doing the impossible for ten years against the most fearsome odds; other theater groups are still trying to continue the struggle in an equally cold and hostile climate. That effort is the true legacy of the Group, and what transforms its apparent failure into permanent and enduring triumph.

The Roots of Terrorism

The Terror Network: The Secret War of International Terrorism by Claire Sterling

(Holt, Rinehart and Winston; $13.95)

For historians and other seekers after truth, terrorism is a most difficult subject. Where terrorist organization and policy are concerned—as distinct from propaganda and the commission of individual crimes—hard evidence scarcely exists. The terrorist not only has a strong incentive to destroy documentary records; he or she has an equally strong incentive not to create such records in the first place.

A certain amount of evidence is available from informers and defectors. But most of this is suspect; people in these categories have a tendency to report, or "recall," what their employers or debriefers want to hear. And these problems are compounded by the keen interest of the intelligence community—especially the CIA and the KGB—in these matters, with the consequent need for vigilance against the danger of manufactured or doctored evidence, ammunition in the cold war, for one side or another or for some faction within the intelligence community.

Claire Sterling shows almost no awareness of the existence of this problem, almost no skepticism about her Western sources. She knows that the KGB goes in for disinformation, the planting of stories on chosen journalists, and so on. But she consistently assumes that anything she is told by her Western intelligence sources must be true. Her copious but naive footnotes often refer to unnamed intelligence sources, whose veracity she simply takes for granted. Time and again the reader, looking for evidence to back some confident assertion in her text, finds that he is bidden to take the word of some spook or spooks:

> Confidential intelligence source. . . . [D]etails confirmed to me by three separate Western security services. . . . Also confirmed to me by Western security sources. . . . An off-duty CIA analyst in Western Europe confirmed the most cogent details. . . . [R]evealing details . . .

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were told to me by one of the best-informed intelligence analysts in Europe. . . . [T]he same intelligence analysts cited in note 22 above [only *one* intelligence analyst was in fact so cited].

All the above citations are from the footnotes to one chapter, six.

This heavy and entirely uncritical reliance on unnamed Western intelligence sources vitiates *The Terror Network*, and justifies skepticism about the author's claims. Nor do Claire Sterling's other sources add much to the credibility of her account. Very often what she cites in support of some cold war claim is a secondary work by some other cold warrior—Brian Crozier and Robert Moss, for example—who relies, as she does, on Western intelligence sources. She may well indeed be citing the same sources, directly or indirectly, under other names, producing a cumulative effect on the unsuspecting reader through a kind of echo chamber.

It has to be borne in mind that deception is a large part of the stock-in-trade of all intelligence agents, not just of Russians, Cubans, etc. They don't tell people—journalists and others—things because they happen to be true. They tell what serves their purpose of the moment. Truth is not a relevant criterion, although credibility and "deniability" are. As an experienced journalist, Claire Sterling must be aware of that. All the more surprising, then, that she takes these people consistently at their word, as if they were known to have the probity and strict concern for historical fact of an Acton or a Ranke. She assumes that because an "intelligence analyst" is unusually well informed (probably according to some other intelligence analyst out of the same stable), he must be interested in making *her* well informed. That is a notable *non sequitur*.

ANY BOOK devoted to the subject chosen by Claire Sterling would have to consist largely of guesswork. But there is guesswork and guesswork: prudent, parsimonious, and skeptical guesswork; and enthusiastic, sweeping guesswork embracing any "evidence" that appears to confirm a favored hypothesis. The first kind of guesswork could produce a valuable book. The second does not. Claire Sterling's guesswork, unfortunately, is entirely of the second kind.

In her opening chapter, Claire Sterling makes an initially modest statement of her thesis: "There is enough evidence lying around to pole-ax the reader. It does not prove a closely planned and centrally commanded worldwide conspiracy. But if these terrorist bands may not be all welded, they are linked." Six pages later, in the same chapter, she has stepped up her claim considerably:

> They made an incredible assortment by the end of the 1970s: ethnic and religious nationalists and separatists, anti-colonial patriots and anti-racists, Sardinian bandits and Mafia thugs, anarchists, Trotskyites, Maoists, unregenerate Stalinists and otherwise unclassified Marxist-Leninists. No single label could be pinned on them: but they had all come to see themselves as elite battalions in a worldwide Army of Communist Combat.

"All" here is meant to include among others the Basque ETA, the Palestinians, and the Provisional IRA, to each of which Claire Sterling devotes a chapter (together with numerous and repetitive references in other chapters). Now, I don't believe that either the Basques or the Palestinians regard themselves as anything like "elite battalions in a worldwide Army of Communist Combat," and I know that members of the Provisional IRA do not regard themselves in any such light. All three are indeed "linked" to other revolutionary organizations—mainly for arms access and technical tips—but they are all primarily extreme nationalist bodies. The Basques have a separatist goal. The Palestinians and the Provisionals have irredentist ones. On these goals, their minds and passions are concentrated with fanatical intensity. They do regard themselves as elites, but not of an international army: elites, respectively, of the Basque, Arab, and Irish nations.

The case I know best, obviously, is that of the Provisional IRA. So let me examine, in a little detail, the case Claire Sterling makes (mainly in chapter nine, "The Longest War: The Provisional IRA") for incorporating the Provisionals in that "worldwide Army of Communist Combat."

At first sight, the Provisionals are singularly improbable as recruits to a Communist army, because they are a breakaway from one. They seceded from the old IRA (leaving behind the "Official" IRA as a rump) because its then Marxist leadership wanted to fight a class war, mainly by political means. The Provisionals wanted to get on with a nationalist-sectarian-military campaign against the British and the Protestants—and that is what they have been carrying on, with the terrible consequences we know.

THE ONE-LEGGED BOY ON THE FIRST DAY OF SPRING

Today an April drizzle
freshens black snow.
I crank the window
to catch a whiff of leaves.
All hell breaks loose,
nostalgia crackles in my chest.
So many springs! I pray,
now let whatever happens come.

Beating his arms like wings,
a boy is hopping down the road—
he flies—playing some game,
getting some place by leaps and bounds.
I slow my car to grin
into his face. His lips
are clenched,
his pale eyes fierce,
the one empty flap of his slacks
whips loose. The drizzle picks up
momentum and slams down.
Life, what do you want?
The kid won't stop, he waves me on.
Head thrown, he gallops.
He drinks down the rain.

L.M. Rosenberg

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Claire Sterling knows that the Provisionals started as a nationalist breakaway from a Marxist-led organization. She claims, however—as other students of the Provisionals also have claimed—that the Provisionals subsequently became "ultra-left Marxists," "well to the left of the Official wing." If so, they are Marxists of a rather peculiar kind. Claire Sterling explains that it was easier for the Russians to help the Provisionals because it was the Officials who were the known Marxists. "For a military buildup, meanwhile, the truculent and loudly anti-Communist Provisional IRA offered Moscow an ideal alternative." So very complicated.

Claire Sterling can easily show that the Provisionals have got some arms from Eastern Europe—as they have from America—and that they have ties with other terrorist organizations. These facts are well known. But what evidence does she produce in support of her claim that the Provisionals have evolved ideologically into "ultra-left Marxists"? The evidence consists of an excerpt from an Italian revolutionary periodical and of statements by two former student "civil rights" militants now fellow travelers of the Provisonal IRA—Bernadette Devlin and Michael Farrell. Let me consider this evidence, and try to put it in that context.

I START with the Italian piece because it is the germ of this little collection. Claire Sterling writes:

> Thus were fifteen million Irish-Americans conned into bankrolling the Provisional IRA's war. They thought it was an open and aboveboard war to free the Irish north from Britain and merge it with the free Irish south. In fact, it was and is a war against north and south both—the 'colonial north' and the 'quisling south'—fought to 'destabilize capitalism in the whole of Ireland,' and in Great Britain as well, and in all Western Europe besides. The Provos have said as much, in so many words, to their friends. ('We must educate the workers to destabilize capitalism in the whole of Ireland through armed struggle, creating an irremediable conflict between the needs of local capitalism and international imperialism, and those of the popular masses,' they confided to *ControlInformazione*, the house organ of Italy's Red Brigades.)

Now it's obvious that "the Provos" collectively don't talk in these terms. Presumably somebody on their behalf did say something like that to somebody in *ControlInformazione*. Claire Sterling assumes that the Italian interview constitutes the real, the esoteric doctrine, while Provo statements in America etc. are merely exercises in deception. This is a gratuitous assumption, and a false one. The Provos, like other people in similar positions, choose horses for courses, so when they want support from foreign reds they send someone who can present the Provo cause in terms foreign reds are likely to fancy. To New York, on the other hand, they send a good Irish Catholic Republican. But—and this is the fact that Claire Sterling gets inside out—it is the good Catholic who is for real. The people who are being conned are the foreign reds.

THERE ARE, of course, nothing like "fifteen million Irish-Americans" engaged in bankrolling the Provisionals. But those Irish-Americans who do regularly contribute to the Provos are getting exactly what they are paying for: the war of Green against Orange and Blue; Catholic gunmen shooting down the Prods and the Brits. That is the reality on the ground. Nor would the Irish-American supporters be shocked—as Claire Sterling supposes—to learn that the Provisionals are hostile to the government in the south as well as in the north. This is not, as she imagines, some sinister new position reached secretly under exotic Marxist influence. It has been the position of all IRA men and their friends, including their friends in the United States, ever since a separate Irish state came into existence 60 years ago. It is not a matter of alien influence at all. It is deeply rooted in the history of Irish Republicanism, something about which Claire Sterling is hopelessly at sea.

I shall not weary the reader by supplying the quotations from Michael Farrell—whose name Claire Sterling gets wrong—or Bernadette Devlin. They are in the same vein as the *ControlInformazione* piece and it may well have been one of the pair—Michael Farrell—who talked to the Red Brigade (the echo-chamber effect again). But it is as futile to try to decide what the Provos are about by consulting the writings or speeches of Devlin and Farrell as it would have been to try to read Stalin's mind by studying the utterances of La Pasionaria. These two ex-students are propagandists and agitators on the fringe of the Provisional movement: useful accessories, no more. The IRA's standards are military and macho, and by those standards Farrell and Devlin don't count for much. Civilian propagandists belong in what the IRA has always called, in a derisive phrase, "the litherary side of the movement." To that side also belongs the political literature of Sinn Fein, especially the export literature. Such verbiage as is contained in Italian interviews with Sinn Fein's president Ruairi O'Bradaigh (quoted at length by Claire Sterling) has no significance other than to attract support among a particular foreign public.

In short, as far as the Provisionals are concerned, Claire Sterling has got it all hopelessly wrong. She could only fit the Provisionals into her pattern by misunderstanding them, and she *has* misunderstood them, comprehensively. Instead of trying to understand the phenomenon first—in its own peculiar historical and local context—and then seeing how it may relate to the rest of her subject matter, what she has done is to jump at quotations and other bits that seem to suit her thesis, and then assume that these handy bits constitute the key to understanding the phenomenon as a whole. Sometimes she bends a particular bit to fit another bit. Thus she claims (with sources of the type described above) that Irishmen and others were trained in Libya by Cubans and East Germans in, among other things, "underwater warfare" and how to be frogmen. And she goes on: "Whether a coincidence or not, the IRA used frogmen to blow up Lord Mountbatten on his fishing boat." It is neither a coincidence nor not a coincidence; it is just plain wrong. Frogmen were not used for that murder.

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Having tried Claire Sterling on things I know about, I am not prepared to take her on trust on things I don't know about, like terrorism in Turkey. Reading her various breathless chapters, I found that she seemed to be applying in every separate, national context the same wildly unscientific practices she used in relation to the Provisionals. If she has got anything right it can be only by accident.

I REFERRED above to the author's thesis. She is not consistent in how she expresses this (see the first two quotations above), but the general picture, emerging from her relentless accumulation of pre-selected data, is reasonably clear. The Kremlin, and in particular the KGB working through Cubans, Palestinians, Libyans, and others, is the coordinating force behind international terrorism in Western Europe.

It is not a hypothesis that can be lightly dismissed, or lightly accepted. The Kremlin is no doubt playing some role in all this, but after reading *The Terror Network*, I am no better informed than I was before about what this role is. What exactly are the Russians supposed to be up to? "Destabilizing capitalism," of course, we are told. But what do the Russians think will happen in Western Europe if terrorism becomes readily widespread and intense? In her chapter on Italy (which ought to be her best, since she lives and works there) Claire Sterling tells us what *she* thinks would be the outcome:

> At most, The Organization could have hoped to reach a level of uncontainable guerrilla warfare, forcing the democratic government to behave like a police state. In Italy, as in Germany, Spain, Ireland, Turkey, and everywhere else since the Tupamaros set their first shining example in Uruguay, the ultra-left terrorists were dead on course for a right-wing dictatorship.

For once I agree with Claire Sterling. To the extent that the terrorists are successful, democracy rather than capitalism is the most likely casualty, as in Uruguay, and the beneficiaries will be right-wing regimes. But do the Russians—who must know this too—really want that? Can they really want to increase the risk of anti-democratic and anti-communist regimes in Western Europe including Germany? Again? So reckless, and indeed mad, a policy (in terms of Russian security) does not accord very well with the caution that most observers ascribe to the present Russian leadership.

Such a policy does not accord well with the known fact that the Western communist parties are more uncompromisingly anti-terrorist than many socialists and liberals are. On Claire Sterling's hypothesis, however, the Kremlin must want to keep the Western Communists out of power. Aldo Moro was the architect of the Christian Democrat-Communist alliance. His murder by the Red Brigades undermined that alliance. Did the Kremlin want that—plus a revival of Italian fascism? It is possible, of course, that they did. But it would take more than Claire Sterling's authority and the kind of evidence she marshals to make me believe this. Granted the political context of Aldo Moro's death, CIA involvement might seem more probable than that of the KGB. But for Claire Sterling such a possibility does not exist.

The case Claire Sterling makes is one which the Reagan administration favors and presses on its skeptical allies. As analysis establishing that case, *The Terror Network* is worthless. But it is likely to have the kind of success that attends any book that tells people exactly what they want to believe: "The Russians are at the bottom of the whole thing. Claire Sterling proved it."

Conor Cruise O'Brien

Conor Cruise O'Brien is consulting editor to the *London Observer*. His most recent book is *Herod: Reflections on Political Violence.*

The Feminist Attack on Smut

Pornography and Silence: Culture's Revenge Against Nature by Susan Griffin

(Harper & Row; $11.95)

It was utterly predictable that freedom of pornographic speech and action would sooner or later come into conflict with the women's movement. Pornography, after all, has long been recognized to be a predominantly male fantasy involving the sadistic humiliation of women. The women's movement itself, however, did not foresee any such conflict. On the contrary: it assumed a perfectly natural congruence between "sexual liberation" and "women's liberation." Indeed, it was this assumption that differentiated what in the 1960s we came to call "women's lib" from the traditional "feminist" movement that is now at least a century and a half old. Whereas feminists demanded more equal treatment and respect for women, corresponding to the more equal status they were in fact achieving in modern society, the movement for women's liberation proposed to create a radically new human condition for both men and women. There was relatively little utopianism in the feminist movement, which was essentially meliorist and adaptive. Women's liberation, in contrast, was utopian in essence, and it was only because it managed to co-opt the feminist impulse that so many were confused as to its ultimate intentions. Today, the unraveling of the movements is well under way. Feminism survives as a sturdy and successful enterprise; women's liberation is enmeshed in intellectual and practical dilemmas.

One such dilemma is illustrated by the issue of pornography. For traditional feminism, this posed no problem at all. It believed pornography to be filthy, debasing, and a suitable object for censorship. But, then, this feminism did not believe in "sexual liberation" on a cosmic scale, only in sexual equality on a human scale. For the women's liberation movement, however, the question of pornography has become the occasion for disillusionment and anxious soul-searching. Witness the opening paragraphs of Susan Griffin's *Pornography and Silence: Culture's Revenge Against Nature*:

> One is used to thinking of pornography as part of a larger movement toward sexual liberation. In the idea of the pornographic image we imagine a revolution against silence. We imagine that eros will be set free first in the mind and then in the body by this revelation of a secret

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part of the human soul. And the pornographer comes to us, thus, through history, portrayed as not only a 'libertine,' a man who will brave injunctions and do as he would, but also a champion of political liberty. For within our idea of freedom of speech we would include freedom of speech about the whole life of the body and the even darkest parts of the mind.

And yet, though in history the movement to restore eros to our idea of human nature and the movement for political liberation are parts of the same vision, we must now make a distinction between the libertine's idea of liberty, 'to do as one likes,' and a vision of human 'liberation.' In the name of political freedom, we would not argue for the censorship of pornography. For political freedom itself belongs to human liberation, and is a necessary part of it. But if we are to move toward human liberation, we must begin to see that pornography and the small idea of 'liberty' are opposed to that liberation.

These pages will argue that pornography is an expression not of human erotic feeling and desire, and not of a love of the life of the body, but of a fear of bodily knowledge, and a desire to silence eros. *This is a notion foreign to a mind trained in this culture.*

I have italicized that last sentence because it is so revealing—so very true and so very false at the same time. The key phrase is "in this culture." Ms. Griffin writes from within the world of the women's liberation movement and is under the impression that, in discovering the roots of pornography in sadism, the roots of sadism in a hatred of life, and a consequent antithesis between eros (the striving for a lost "wholeness" in life by an imperfect creature) and pornography (a lust for the "wholeness" of death), she has come up with a shocking insight. That the antithesis is familiar to just about every moral philosopher who ever lived is something she seems sadly unaware of. Her "culture" is so totally contemporary that one comes away with the impression that, for Ms. Griffin, "research" means consulting authors who have published works during the past two decades. Still, she is on to something and must be given credit for having both the ability and courage to think herself out of "her" culture, as regards this issue at least. Her polemic against pornography and its apologists (whether "liberal" or social-scientific) is shrewd, vigorous, and leaves little unsaid that needs to be said.

And there are many rhetorical passages that combine both eloquence and insight, even as they generate profound misunderstandings. For example:

> All death in pornography is really only the death of the heart. Over and over again, that part of our beings which can feel both in body and mind is ritually murdered. We make a mistake, therefore, when we believe that pornography is simply fantasy, simply a record of sadistic events. For pornography exceeds the boundaries of both fantasy and record and becomes itself an act. Pornography *is* sadism. [Italics in the original.]

But what is "that part of our beings which can feel both in body and mind," and which is "ritually murdered" in pornography? Ms. Griffin specifies it as "the heart," a weak term that evokes echoes of romantic sentimentality. How much more powerful her statement would have been if she had said "the soul"! But Ms. Griffin does not believe that human beings have anything that can be called a soul. In fact, she is convinced that the idea of humanity possessing a soul, as distinct from a "heart," is itself the *fons et origo* of pornography.

Ms. Griffin remains very much a utopian romantic. She believes that the *libido dominandi* is created by culture and against nature, that humanity is "naturally" in an uncorrupted state, that flesh and spirit are "naturally" one, and that the existential contradictions of human experience are imposed on us by sick and wicked cultural traditions. The specific tradition at which she takes aim is Judeo-Christianity. "The metaphysics of Christianity and the metaphysics of pornography are the same," she boldly declares, finding in the Bible the cultural roots of the Marquis de Sade. Much of her book is an autodidact's brash exploration of cultural history that is occasionally very perceptive, more often painfully sophomoric.

THERE IS an element of plausibility, if not exactly truth, in the notion that Judeo-Christianity (as well as Islam and the oriental religions, of course), insofar as it is based on the dualism of flesh and spirit, addresses itself to the same problem as does pornography. And it is also the case that some currents within this religious tradition—generally, if loosely, labeled "gnostic"—seek to transcend this dualism either by extreme ascetism or adventures in sexuality, both of which may feed the "pornographic imagination." But mainstream religious thought, in every time and place, has always sought a reconciliation of flesh and spirit through such institutions as marriage and the family. (The reconciliation is never quite successful, but that's life.) It will not do to take isolated sentences or passages from Scripture—as Ms. Griffin does—which tend to emphasize the body-spirit dichotomy, usually at the expense of body. Such "gnostic" accents are there (far more in Christianity than in Judaism) but subsequent commentaries and "interpretations," constituting the authoritative tradition, always convert them into much more homely doctrine. Some original Christians may indeed have regarded woman as "the vessel of evil," but their descendants ended up offering prayers to the Holy Mother.

So, while it might be fair to say that "the pornographic imagination" is in some ways analogous to, or isomorphic with, the "gnostic" impulse to be found in all religions above the primitive level, it is more accurate to say that, whereas religion regulates and composes this impulse, pornography vulgarizes it. What is "liberated" in pornography is the "morbid" lust to extinguish the human condition itself, and all the complexities of that condition with which culture and civilization and religion attempt to cope.

Nor does culture (above all, religion) achieve its goal simply by warring against nature and "repressing" it. Success, however partial, is only possible because nature itself collaborates in its subordination to culture. Shame and modesty are "natural" to the human species, and the domination of thanatos by eros is equally "natural." This means that "culture" itself is "natural" for the species, as is the very impulse toward sociality. To say of anything that it is pornographic is to mark it as an aberration in sociobiology as well as in culture.

So Ms. Griffin's polemic against pornography goes off the track precisely

"LET'S HOPE, for the sake of Jesse Jackson, Dick Gregory, assorted civil-rights groups, gay alliances, ribbon merchants, and metaphormongers, that Atlanta's got the wrong guy, and that the real killer — a white, rednecked, Moral Majoritarian, supply-side, budget-cutting heterosexual — will be apprehended before he strikes again."

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because, though she has learned much in recent years, she is still entrapped in that cultural current of the 1960s which took Norman O. Brown and Herbert Marcuse as serious philosophers, not merely as the gifted eccentrics they were. This entrapment is further highlighted by the fact that, after excoriating pornography in the most violent terms, she weakly concludes that censorship is no answer. Her cursory explanation is that censorship of pornography inevitably leads to political censorship and political repression.

That such a proposition is so widely proffered and so blandly accepted today reveals the degree to which we are still in thrall to remnants of the "liberation" culture of the 1960s. For only a moment's thought is needed to establish its falsity. After all, we had local censorship of pornography in this country for over two centuries and, whatever bizarre verdicts may have been reached in specific cases, this censorship cannot be shown to have had the slightest impact on freedom of political discussion. Indeed, no such claim was ever made—not by dissident Marxists, Socialists, Communists, anarchists, or whatever. It was only when the utopian idea of "sexual liberation" was merged into an equally utopian idea of the political liberation of humanity from all the unfairness and "injustices" of life itself that pornography came to be viewed as a positive moral force, because it challenged the validity of our fundamental cultural beliefs. Ms. Griffin rejects this conclusion as to the meaning of pornography, but is still trying to remain loyal to the premises that implied exactly this meaning. The contradiction makes for an interesting and exasperating book.

Irving Kristol

Irving Kristol is editor of the *Public Interest*.

Literary Criticism, A to Z

Ferocious Alphabets
by Denis Donoghue

(Little, Brown; $13.95)

During the past couple of years, Denis Donoghue, through a series of outspoken book reviews, has come to figure in some people's minds as a benighted foe of the new philosophic criticism, or, if you view things from the other side of the literary barricades, as a staunch defender of humanistic values against the depredations of deconstruction. *Ferocious Alphabets*, which is both an inquiry into the nature of the reading experience and an account of contemporary literary theory and criticism, is, as might be expected, a polemic book. What some readers may find surprising is the remarkable restraint with which the polemic impulse is exercised, the degree to which it is submerged in the patient exposition of two mutually incompatible conceptions of reading, one of which Donoghue rejects yet seeks to understand fully and fairly.

Ferocious Alphabets is a deceptively casual book. It begins with the texts of six five-minute talks on language Donoghue originally gave for the BBC. These are engaging, gracefully written, and at their best suggestive, but seem rather slight as a point of departure for a theoretical argument on the general nature of language and reading. The next chapter, which is a series of reflections on the talks buttressed by concepts from Hans Georg Gadamer, Paul Ricoeur, and William Empson, does not do much to rescue the radio texts from their limited status as occasional pieces. The third chapter, entitled "Communication, Communion, Conversation," continues the chatty personal manner of the two previous chapters, but one should not be misled by either the informality or the brevity: in these half-dozen pages Donoghue puts forth an original proposition of great moment, out of which he will build the rest of his book and with which a good deal of contemporary literary theory may be critically measured.

Let me suggest that much of the discussion of literature generated by structuralism and its radical aftermath is seriously skewed by a commitment to what might be called the "linguistic fallacy," and it is to this issue that the crucial third chapter of *Ferocious Alphabets* is addressed. Before I go on with Donoghue, I'd like to offer a brief explanation of this all too fashionable confusion. Because literary works are made up of words, it is often assumed now that the most precise terms to account for what happens in a literary text are to be drawn from linguistics. This is rather like assuming that the structure and function of stone houses must be understood primarily through geological concepts because the building material is, after all, stone. Such a notion has led to remarkable instances of naiveté on the part of highly sophisticated critics. Thus, Tzvetan Todorov, in *The Poetics of Prose*, imagines that functions within a narrative can be more adequately described by speaking of the characters and actions as narrative adjectives, narrative verbs, and so forth; this would-be scientific terminology is justified chiefly by the fact that written narratives are made up of adjectives, verbs, and other parts of speech. An immensely influential essay by Roman Jakobson which draws—I would say overdraws—a distinction between metaphor and metonymy as the two basic modes of linking elements of language has been seized on by some as the universal key to literature. To cite just one recent example, the British critic David Lodge, in *The Modes of Modern Writing*, adopts Jakobson's terms to explain the character of modern prose and the difference between fictional and factual narratives, only to succeed mainly in demonstrating the fatiguing aridness of that formula as it is invoked again and again.

LITERARY theorists under the influence of Jakobson or the linguistically oriented *Nouvelle Critique* tend to assume that what is conveyed to us in a sonnet by Baudelaire or in a novel by Tolstoy involves basically the same paradigm of communication, however ramified the complications, as, say, a spoken instruction to take out the garbage. Against this assumption, Denis Donoghue shrewdly argues that the linguistic model of addresser-message-addressee which, according to Jakobson, is "inalienably involved in verbal communication," may be fundamentally inappropriate to imaginative literature. He proposes conversation instead as the proper model for the complex transaction that takes place between literary text and reader. In conversation, that is, the aim is less meaning than relation, less communication than communion,

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and literature is conceived here as the artful use of language by the writer to recreate for each reader the primary intimacy and the relational, virtually physical concreteness of conversational exchange. "A conversation is what it is meant to be not because of the safe delivery of messages but because of the nature of the feelings, and the forms in which the desires are exchanged. The unit is replaced by the sound of voices."

DONOGHUE then centers his argument on the idea of the voice—voice arising from a living, breathing body, enjoying a kind of uncanny afterlife in the writer's rhythms, images, diction, syntax, all the fine network of interconnections of his language. Voice—whether construed as the voice of the implied author or of a persona—is clearly Donoghue's response to the Derridean notion of ineluctable absence at the very heart of every text; in fact, the effect of his argument is to replace the French notion of "text" with something like "utterance," for, as he candidly states, he assumes that conversation is the privileged form of language and that "language is fulfilled only in speech." Is this strong sense of the primacy of the spoken word before and in literature part of Donoghue's Irish cultural background? Proust, I am led to muse, has to be read in order to take in the sinuous perfection of his periodic sentences; Joyce's verbal music must ultimately be heard.

Having laid out these premises, Donoghue proceeds to demonstrate their manifold implications through a rather odd strategy of exposition that at times may seem desultory or even arbitrary but that by and large serves his purpose. The main body of the book consists of three long chapters, "Style as Compensation," "Epireading," and "Graphireading." Each of these chapters comprises a series of brief sections, averaging six or seven pages, on different critics or theorists (with space also assigned to two poets, Hopkins and Mallarmé). The choice of figures does not always seem inevitable, and, understandably, Donoghue is more illuminating on some than on others. Thus, Richard Poirier appears among the epireaders chiefly so that Donoghue can comment on a useful distinction between Frost and Stevens made in Poirier's book on Frost, and Poirier ends up looking a little odd rubbing shoulders here with critics like George Poulet and Kenneth Burke who have elaborated global theoretical approaches to literature.

In any case, Donoghue is a writer blessed with lucidity and poised perceptiveness, and it is impressive how often he can be finely instructive on individual writers while advancing his general argument through bits and pieces. In "Style as Compensation" he proposes the interesting notion that many critics of different persuasions have fashioned distinctive rhetorical instruments to make up for the lack of their living presence as speakers, and so to edge, cajole, or wrench the reader into the position of virtual interlocutor. The stylistic analysis here of R.P. Blackmur is brilliant, much the best thing on Blackmur I have read, and reflects the subtlest understanding from within of how complex expository prose is made.

Donoghue has a keen sense of the way a writer plays with language and discovers his meanings through play, but, committed as he is to communion and referentiality in writing, he is tough on critics who care about play above all else. Thus, with a delicate maneuver of epigrammatic wit, he says of Hugh Kenner, "If accuracy is the scholar's morality, Kenner settles for plausibility as more congenial to a self-delighting performance"; and, more bluntly, as befits the writer in question, he observes of William Gass, "Gass's writing, like Barthelme's, is a minor scandal because it offers, instead of wisdom, an exhibition of skill."

AFTER THIS brisk promenade through the permutations of critical style as a compensation for the absence of living conversational exchange, Donoghue sets forth his two kinds of readers. Epireaders include such diverse critical types as Paul Ricoeur and Harold Bloom. The common denominator is the impulse to move "from print to voice," "to restore the words to a source, a human situation involving speech, character, personality, and destiny construed as having a personal form." By this point, we can readily infer that Donoghue's sympathies are with the epireaders, but he is careful not to make partisan pronouncements while carrying out the task of exposition, and he has some penetrating criticisms to make of his sundry epireaders (the pages on Bloom in particular are a model of incisive critique combined with imaginative sympathy).

Graphireaders, whom Donoghue defines as those who "[deal] with writing as such and [do] not think of it as transcribing an event properly construed as vocal and audible," must be the enemy for a critic committed to voice. But Donoghue accords them the consideration of dispassionate exposition, scrupulously following the stages of their own logic without the intervention of polemic commentary. He begins the tradition of graphireading, plausibly enough, with the poetic practice of Mallarmé, who underscored the status of the poem as text and devised means to liberate language from "its natural reference, the ball-and-chain of fact." The uncompromising aim of this tradition is to stress writing as such, entirely displacing voice by text; and its central figure, Jacques Derrida, in polar contrast to Donoghue himself, "proposes a form of reading that acknowledges writing as a primary act rather than a mere accessory after the fact of speech." Nice distinctions are made among various graphireaders—from Derrida, with his elation over substituting writerly play for the discovery of meaning; to Paul de Man, who soberly arrives at a conclusion of "suspended ignorance," an

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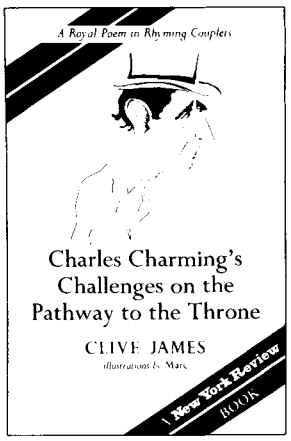
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atmosphere "compounded of scruple and interrogation"; to Derrida's extremist disciple, Lucette Finas, who perpetrates on a sonnet of Mallarmé's an act of exegetical terrorism (the figure is mine, not Donoghue's), exploding the semantic integrity of the text and displacing one act of writing with another one wholly her own.

Donoghue manages to restrain any judgmental animus against graphireading to the end of his chapter—though his concluding list of 14 distinguishing features of graphireading almost, and necessarily, crosses the line at a couple of points, as when he notes the background of intellectual Maoism ("Interpretation is a bourgeois procedure because it offers its adept the satisfaction of discovery; this is the intellectual's version of acquiring goods, property, possessions").

Then, in a brief final chapter, he states his own credo as a reader. It is stated, I should like to stress, as a frank confession of allegiance, but on a note of intellectual humility. He confesses to being no philosopher—a role rather too many literary critics amateurishly have been playing of late—and to having no confident means to answer the epistemological conundrums Derrida and his confreres have raised. But as a reader he hears in literary expression a voice that speaks "in the mode of desire, need, or satisfaction," that invokes the category of pleasure, which is indisputable, as knowledge is not. "These considerations," he concludes, "do not refute Derrida, but they provide an adversary idiom, animated by the body." It is an adversary idiom very much needed by contemporary discourse on literature, and serious readers should be grateful to Denis Donoghue for having framed it in this strongly personal, idiosyncratic, resonant book.

Robert Alter

Robert Alter's most recent book is *The Art of Biblical Narrative* (Basic Books).

The View from the Village

Dandil: Stories from Iranian Life by Gholam-Hossein Sa'edi

(Random House; $11.95)

When Gholam-Hossein Sa'edi was imprisoned and tortured by the Iranian secret police, during the reign of the late shah, he was forced to denounce his own writing as "misleading." It did not reflect, he was pressed to say, "the great social progress of Iran."

If you read this last phrase directly after reading *Dandil*, you may find it downright comical. True, *Dandil* reflects no social progress. It reflects instead a way of life that's wracked with poverty and inequity, corrupt in every way imaginable. And did those secret police, perhaps, feel a little stab of recognition if they chanced upon the title story, in which slum dwellers erect a sort of Potemkin village to impress a visiting American?

> You've got to clean up this filth, wash and sweep this place good, so the stink won't kill him. And put some flowerpots around to make him feel better. And then cover up that sewer in the middle of the street. . . . If he gets pissed off, he can wipe out Dandil completely.

The five stories in this book come from several collections previously published in Iran. They show various facets of Iranian life: a red-light district, a provincial town, a south Tehran slum, the underworld of an urban hospital complex. Four of the stories have a satisfying clarity of purpose; they make their points effectively, without belaboring them. The exception is "The Game Is Over," a boy-who-cried-wolf tale about a youth who fakes his own death as a reproach to his abusive father. We're told in the introduction that this story is "an exploration of the psychology of the oppressed," but it seems more a display of private, random cruelty, and the twist at the end is too exaggerated to cause the reader anything but discomfort.

"Dandil," on the other hand, is a little gem, recommended for anyone hoping to understand Iran's current anti-Americanism. Dandil is the name of a particularly wretched red-light district. Its citizens—squalid and sick and addicted to drugs—are electrified by the arrival of a beautiful young girl at the local brothel. If the proper customer can be found for her, money will pour in; and, of course, the most obvious choice would be an American from the nearby Army base.

To the people of Dandil, America is a magical place overflowing with riches. Small wonder, then, that there's such a flurry to cover the sewer and bring out the flowerpots. And the mood, at the moment when the American arrives at the brothel, resembles that of a city fair. Crowds have gathered and vendors are hawking Pepsi.

But the American is an overweight drunk in tight Bermuda shorts. He treats the crowd boorishly, and once he has deflowered the girl he leaves without paying. The people of Dandil feel unable to object, because "he's not like you and me, he's American. If he gets pissed off, if he's not satisfied, he's going to turn Dandil inside out. He'll kill us all and destroy everything."

The third story, "Keykavus, Baldy and Me," describes the frustrations that result when petty officials hold unlimited power. Three men travel to a provincial town to make a movie. Once there, they are summarily arrested and hauled before His Excellency the Colonel to explain their presence. The oppressive atmosphere of the remote, dusty town comes through vividly, as does the precariousness of the visitors' situation, but in general the tone is humorous. Listen to His Excellency's interrogation:

> 'Well, where are your actors?'
>
> 'The film we're making doesn't need any actors.'
>
> The colonel smiled. 'You mean you can make a movie without actors?'
>
> 'Why not? Not all films have to have actors.'
>
> 'What are you talking about? Do you take me for some kind of idiot?'
>
> Keykavus spoke up. 'No, Your Excellency. They call this kind of film a documentary.'
>
> The colonel snapped, 'What kind of film?'
>
> 'A documentary.'
>
> 'You mean a movie that will be a document, don't you?'
>
> 'More or less.'
>
> 'Then you have come here to collect documents, isn't that it?'

The last two pieces in the collection are novellas rather than short stories. "Calm in the Presence of Others" is a perfectly wonderful study of the unsettling effects of modernization and westernization. An elderly colonel, now re-

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tired, decides that he and his wife should go stay with his two grown daughters. From the start, there is an edginess to the visit. The colonel cannot bring himself to wire ahead and notify his daughters; "just as he reached the counter at the telegraph office he would think better of it and turn away, fancying that his daughters would so rejoice to hear of his impending arrival that their health might be affected." Consequently, when he and his wife show up, one of the daughters is entertaining a male guest behind the closed door of the parlor—something unthinkable in the colonel's time. It emerges that the daughters are very modern indeed, with their empty love affairs and cheap behavior. The colonel gradually retreats and grows confused. His behavior becomes more and more bizarre, until finally he is committed to an asylum.

The style of this piece is both dreamy and abrupt. Sudden shifts of scene and surrealistic conversation convey the sense of meaninglessness that most of the characters experience. A crow keeps detaching the radio antenna from a neighbor's roof. A young man mourns the high expectations everyone used to have and asks what he is to do with his present "cold, dead, icy existence." His companion, a doctor, prescribes a tranquilizer, and the young man asks, "Do they cause loss of memory?"

"The Rubbish Heap" demonstrates the cyclical nature of poverty and brutality. Young Ali travels the streets with his destitute father, who shows him neither love nor kindness. On a cold night, the father sleeps in a telephone booth while Ali shivers outside. Then Ali begins to hustle a living for himself in a hospital. He is desperate enough to undertake any number of unsavory tasks, including turning informer for the secret police. In our last sight of Ali, he is sitting in a telephone booth.

BECAUSE most of the characters in this collection use gutter language or slang, translation must have been difficult. Two of the three translators—Hasan Javadi and Julie Scott Meisami—resort to words like "crummy," "cops," "great" (in its colloquial sense), "bucks" (for money), and "john" (for a prostitute's customer)—all slightly out of place in stories where people are named Panjak and Esmail Agha.

The third translator, Robert Campbell, manages beautifully without the jarring Americanisms, but there is a disturbing looseness in his interpretations. His translation of "The Game Is Over" first appeared in an anthology called *New Writing from the Middle East* (Mentor, 1978). Since that printing, he has made some revisions. A shout into a well, in the earlier version, would "wind around the well and re-emerge," while in the later version it would "echo in the wells and come out again"—a significant difference, since the earlier version has more freshness and is also closer to the original Farsi. Or look at the following sentence, from the first and second translations respectively:

> One day I would gather some tin and Hasani a little glass, and another day Hasani would gather some tin and I a little glass.
>
> One day I might pick up some tin, and Hasani might find some glass.

Again, the first translation is the more faithful.

It may seem unfair to single out this story simply because it's the only one whose original and whose first translation happen to be at hand. But there's an issue worth mentioning here: Gholam-Hossein Sa'edi must have worked with care to create the image of a shout winding around a well, or the rhythm of tin and glass, glass and tin; and now that work is blurred if not altogether lost. Ideally, a translation is a flawless windowpane through which the words of the author shine undistorted.

But that's only ideally, of course. As it is, *Dandil* still affects and enlightens us. It is a valuable piece of work—artistically, because of its vigor and integrity; and culturally, because of what it reveals about one of the last places on earth that still seems truly, deeply foreign to most Americans.

Anne Tyler

The Making of the Counterculture

In Struggle: SNCC and the Black Awakening of the 1960s by Clayborne Carson

(Harvard University Press; $22)

When four black college students sat down at a lunch counter formerly reserved for whites on February 1, 1960, in Greensboro, North Carolina, a political movement was born. However, it is one of the ironies of the story of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee that for all the excitement it generated both in the national media and among its dedicated participants, its direct impact on the civil rights revolution was minimal. It neither desegregated public facilities on any significant scale nor registered black voters in substantial numbers. But as Clayborne Carson's sympathetic though unfailingly levelheaded book makes clear, it nurtured the countercultural and antiwar movement of the late 1960s and 1970s. This was probably SNCC's most enduring contribution.

SNCC was an organization of young idealists—formed in 1960 to "preserve the spontaneity and militancy" of the first lunch counter sit-ins. It grew from a movement that stressed nonviolence, self-expression, and the encouragement of local initiative to one which, by 1966, demanded allegiance to black separatism and drew its strength from northern urban militants, no longer from southern blacks.

By 1962 SNCC was the most radical of the civil rights groups—the most unwilling to compromise in the interest of political effectiveness, to purge Communists, to post bond to extricate its members from jail, or to settle for a cup of coffee in the company of whites. Above all, its unconventional internal organization and the freewheeling personal style of its workers set it apart. As Carson describes it, it was the "informality, openness, and impetuousness that made the group unique." Although by 1962 SNCC had recognized the necessity for a politically skilled, full-time staff (and even before that relied heavily on the leadership talents of James Foreman), in its formative and most influential years, it remained philosophically opposed to any sort of hierarchical structure. Robert Moses, the self-effacing hero who changed his name to shake off the mantle of power, epitomized the SNCC ethos.

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The radical instincts that youthful SNCC workers brought with them into the movement were sharpened by their experience working in such places as McComb, Mississippi. Led by Robert Moses, SNCC began a voter registration drive in McComb and surrounding counties in the summer of 1961, and between the middle of August and the end of October, Moses was attacked and beaten by a cousin of the sheriff; a co-worker was ordered out of a registrar's office at gunpoint and then hit with a pistol; a sympathetic black was murdered by a state representative; another black who asked for Justice Department protection to testify at the inquest was beaten (and three years later killed); a white worker's eye was gouged; and, finally, 12 SNCC workers and local supporters were fined and sentenced to substantial terms in jail. At first SNCC had resisted turning from demonstrations of protest to the registration of black voters, believing that the pressure to do so from the Kennedy administration stemmed from a desire to pull the movement onto safer ground. But in McComb, as Carson puts it, the staff discovered that "voter registration in the deep South offered as much a test of militancy and courage as did direct action protest." And in the wake of McComb the term "revolutionary" was adopted—indicating not only a commitment to the overthrow of segregation, but also an estrangement from more moderate groups.

Radical white workers, largely from the north, further fanned the flames of SNCC's militancy. By 1962 about a third of the participants at the annual conference were white, and while some were from socialist or communist backgrounds, many others simply saw SNCC as an outlet for their less ideologically formed dissatisfaction with American life.

Despite their radicalism, whites soon came to be considered a conservative restraint on black aspirations—reinforcing habits of deference and dependence, as well as oppressive cultural norms. The problem of white involvement first surfaced in 1963; by 1966, whites on the staff had been reduced to a handful. Stokely Carmichael had taken charge, and black power was the new slogan.

Carson associates the movement toward racial separatism with "SNCC's increasingly obvious limitations as a political organization." As SNCC workers lost sight of the organizing techniques responsible for earlier accomplishments, he says, its effectiveness declined. But a close reading of *In Struggle* suggests a different story. Effectiveness was never SNCC's strong suit. It is even questionable how interested many members were in either the desegregation of public facilities or the registration of southern blacks. For some, the attraction of SNCC was simply the opportunity "to do something adventurous and different." Carson portrays Robert Moses as "giving higher standing to his humanistic values than to the goal of political power," and states that "SNCC's appeal was based not on its political effectiveness and certainly not on its material rewards, but on its identity as a morally consistent activist community." Workers hoped to "free people's minds from the restraints of established order" and to create a world in which everybody could say things and "not even have to do such things as vote or have leaders or officers." When Julian Bond first decided to run for a seat in the Georgia state legislature—when there was finally a chance for some genuine black power—SNCC workers worried that their colleagues in the campaign had "sold out" by "wearing ironed shirts, ties, and slacks."

Of course the obstacles to voter registration projects in the deep south were literally insurmountable; only federal power could do the job. It was the 1965 Voting Rights Act—passed in the wake of the Selma demonstrations led by Martin Luther King—that enfranchised southern blacks. SNCC workers in Le Flore County, Mississippi, enlarged the ranks of black voters by only 300, yet within two months of the arrival of federal registraries, 5,000 blacks were registered in that same county. In 1964 there were only 70 black elected officials in the US. Today, largely due to the impact of the 1965 act, there are more than 4,600.

It is a curious omission in this otherwise comprehensive book that it fails to discuss the significance of either the 1964 Civil Rights Act or the 1965 Voting Rights Act. But *In Struggle* is an insider's account, and on the inside the legislation probably aroused little excitement. SNCC's experience with the Kennedy and Johnson administrations and with the Democratic party had left it deeply distrustful of conventional politics and federal power. Equally important, by 1965—the year of the Watts riots—SNCC had shifted its concern from desegregation and disfranchisement to issues of economic equality.

Still, SNCC's importance should not be underestimated. Carson only hints at the point, but his account clearly suggests that the organization was an important bridge between the politics and culture of the 1950s and that of the late 1960s and the 1970s. The divisions that continue to plague the liberal community over questions of race, for instance, are in part a SNCC legacy. Robert Kennedy's refusal to protect SNCC workers, and the Democratic party's unwillingness to give Mississippi blacks a vote at the 1964 convention, tainted the liberals' reputation. Their moral confidence has never wholly recovered.

The drift of culturally rebellious young people to the countryside in the late 1960s and 1970s was in part a SNCC legacy. Many SNCC workers romanticized rural life. Jane Stembridge, the organization's first executive secretary, for instance, viewed black Mississippians as freer than activists like her. Rural blacks, she said, possessed "a closeness with the earth . . . a closeness with each other in the sense of community developed out of . . . the strength of being poor." In fact, the new left's linking of complex, organized institutions with oppression was a SNCC inheritance. Mario Savio, leader of the free speech movement, went from SNCC to Berkeley where, he said, he was carrying on the same good fight; southern bigots and university officials were equally oppressive. Under SNCC guidance, too, cultural rebellion became a substitute for social reform. Unconventional living arrangements and dress codes became signs of moral and political progress.

In Struggle, then, is not only an important contribution to the history of the struggle for civil rights; it also enlarges our general understanding of contemporary American politics and culture.

Abigail Thernstrom

Abigail Thernstrom is writing a book for the Twentieth Century Fund on the impact of the Voting Rights Act.

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Correspondence, *from page 7*

our society is suffused by a universal team spirit enforced by the government, the less it will be like America.

John J. Reilly
Jersey City, New Jersey

Platonic collectivism

To the editors:

We've finally forced the collectivist Hive—liberal, socialist, Marxist—to talk about the differences between authoritarian and totalitarian regimes. And naturally, Hive theoreticians rush to minimize the whole thing as a tendentious Reaganite distinction. For, Michael Walzer tells us, "to the naked eye," many of "'our'" dictatorships don't look all that different form "'theirs'" ("Totalitarianism vs. Authoritarianism," *TNR*, July 4 & 11).

Michael (Third Force) Walzer is an accomplished distinction-monger, all right. But his ingenious preciosities evade a difference obvious enough to the naked eye of a non-collectivist: totalitarian borders are sealed off, and would-be refugees shot. That's shot, boys.

Does he mention refugees? Yes—but only to point out that Pakistani repression produced "the largest single group of refugees since World War II." And why not? A populous country, with an open border handy. But what about all those refugees *manqués* behind the deadly borders of the Socialist bloc?

As usual, the lofty intellectual has chosen the criterion least embarrassing to the Great Principle. No wonder he puts quotation marks around "our" and "theirs." Score one for the Third Force: platonic collectivism.

Joseph Sobran
National Review
New York, New York

Mayhem in the Mideast

To the editors:

The Israeli attack on the Iraqi nuclear reactor encouraged the proliferation of nuclear weapons in the Mideast. (See "No Option," *TNR*, June 20). Here's why. First, any nation which decides to develop nuclear weapons will develop them no matter what the cost. The Iraqis have invested billions of dollars and tremendous national prestige in their Manhattan Project. They aren't going to just fold up now; they simply will redouble their efforts, and eventually they will succeed, most likely with aid from Pakistan or Libya. Second, if a nation wants nuclear weapons, it's better to build them sooner than later. Nations which are considering proliferation have to reason that they should try to develop nuclear weapons while they can, as rapidly and secretly as possible. Too early is better than never.

And, what's worse, once a nation has obtained nuclear weapons, it's in a "use it or lose it" situation. Israel, after all, has declared its willingness to make preemptive strikes against a developed nuclear capacity. Iraq and the other Mideast nations will not be *able* to deter. They must pursue an immediate war-fighting strategy or every second they have nuclear weapons they risk an Israeli preemptive attack.

W. Frederick Zimmerman
Alexandria, Virginia

A Right-to-Lifer's rejoinder

To the editors:

M.M.K. in the Washington Diarist (*TNR*, June 13) opines that the right wing "really wants to make pregnancy the punishment for sex." While I believe this to be both candid and wonderfully incisive, it is nonetheless most provocative. Roused, I should like to offer a parallel rejoinder. Pro-choicers support an abortion option because they prefer spontaneous, no-hassle sex. Should such encounters result in the inconvenience of pregnancy, these *soi-disant* liberals of the "me generation" want an easy way out. Their petulent whine, when faced with social or moral responsibilities, sums it up: "Don't hassle me, man!"

Mark J. Sey, MD
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Correction

To the editors:

An extremely unfortunate editing error changed the meaning of a sentence in my review of *The Enigma of Felix Frankfurter* and *Independent Journey* in the June 27 issue of *TNR*. The sentence, "There is no evidence whatever that Hamilton, Madison, and others intended the Constitution to protect more than property rights . . . ," was incorrect. What I actually wrote was "There is no evidence whatever that Hamilton, Madison, and the others intended the Constitution to give people any stronger protection than their property. . . ."

Joseph W. Bishop Jr.
Yale Law School
New Haven, Connecticut

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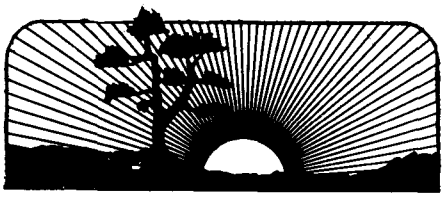

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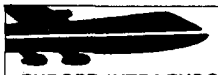

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Washington Diarist

Sanctimony

Some of the surviving remnant of European Jewery recently gathered for a reunion in Israel. There were a few press reports of unexpected reunions between people long assumed killed in places like Dachau and Sobibor, which more and more writers and intellectuals now deny ever existed. In Jerusalem one night I met a survivor of the July 16, 1942, Nazi round-up of the Jews of Paris. A veteran of the Auschwitz and Drancy concentration camps, she seemed agitated not about an episode that had robbed her of her husband, child, parents, and siblings, but about an article in a French newspaper on the June 7 Israeli bombing of the Iraqi nuclear reactor. "The sanctimonious French, they write and talk these days in outrage of nothing else. They have the temerity to call the bombing *la grande rafle*." I asked her what was so wrong with that characterization. "Oh, you don't know? '*La grande rafle*,' that's what the French called the round-up of thousands of Jewish families from Paris at the Vél d'Hiv. Only then the French did not linger on it long; and they certainly weren't outraged."

On the flight home, I read the proofs of David Pryce-Jones's forthcoming *Paris in the Third Reich* (Holt, Rinehart and Winston). It is a narrative more riveting even than *Is Paris Burning?* (to which it should really be seen as the indispensable prelude). Pryce-Jones musters depressing evidence not only about right-wing collaborators with the Occupation but also about respected leftist figures who made their own squalid accommodations with the Nazis. Some of these folk in the postwar years took to lecturing others on moral courage. There is a wonderful portrait of Albert Camus showing how genuinely different he was. Hitherto unpublished photographs and interviews with some of the significant occupiers and occupied reveal Paris at its most depraved. Pryce-Jones tells about Paris's reaction to *la grande rafle*. "Everybody knew what was happening; yet there was neither spontaneous nor organized protest of any kind."

A few people like Noam Chomsky still believe that the Khmer Rouge did not do very much harm to the Cambodian people. But I'd be surprised if they don't think that whatever sufferings the Cambodians did endure (and die from) can be debited to Henry Kissinger's account. That's the view of William Shawcross's *Sideshow: Kissinger, Nixon and the Destruction of Cambodia*. I'd taken my own view of the book from the favorable reviews by my learned teacher Stanley Hoffmann in the *New York Review* and from my learned friend Michael Walzer here in *TNR*. I've now read the book and the explosive exchanges between Shawcross and Kissinger aide Peter Rodman in the smart-assed right-wing sheet, *American Spectator*. I'm no longer sure. Shawcross charges that Kissinger's decision to bomb the North Vietnamese enclaves in Cambodia was the cause of the auto-genocide committed by that country's Communist guerrillas under Pol Pot against their own people. The evidence doesn't sustain the charge or buttress the assumption that North Vietnamese troops should have been left secure in the Cambodian sanctuaries they invaded. Since one reason the US supported Lon Nol after his coup was precisely to prevent the coming to power of Pol Pot, the Reagan administration's support, like that of Jimmy Carter, for this mass murderer and his homicidal band as the "legitimate" government of Cambodia is revolting.

The controversy swirling around Jacobo Timerman continues. The right attacks him to salvage the reputation of Argentina as a fitting ally against the Soviet Union. However, the fact is that it is neither a fitting ally nor an ally at all. The growing Soviet-Argentinian liaison, a manifestation of the basic fraternity of tyrannies, is one of those uncomfortable facts the right prefers to ignore. Many on the left, sad to say, champion Timerman not because they care for Jews but because they don't really want America to have allies, not against the Soviet Union at any rate. The lure of beating up on Argentina, with anti-Semitism as the stick, has also created a new chorus of people idiosyncratically concerned for Jews. Jimmy Carter's assistant secretary of state for human rights, Patt Derian, for example, makes her debut as someone worried about Israel, "blackmailed," as she solicitously puts it, into selling arms to Argentina to safeguard several thousand Jews held hostage there. Anthony Lewis, in the *New York Times* and elsewhere, also seems obsessed by the grim portents for Argentinian Jewry. If he's to be believed, Buenos Aires will soon figure in the Jewish martyrology right behind Buchenwald and Belsen. But Lewis is not one of those hysterics who sees enemies of Jews elsewhere: for years he's been assuring his readers that Yassir Arafat's PLO has no particular wicked designs against the Jews, not even against the Jews of Tel Aviv or Jerusalem. And at the same time that Lewis is warning of the virulent anti-Semitism of the government of Roberto Viola, he is also asserting that Saddam Hussein of Baghdad "has shown signs of moving away from an utterly rejectionist position." The evidence? "Many diplomats." In any case Lewis is persuaded that Iraq was not making bombs. Why? Because he wants to be persuaded.

Other bien pensants have also seized the occasion to exculpate Iraq of aggressive nuclear motives. They fix instead on Israel as the destabilizer of the international system, and none more treacherously than those who speak with the authority of something called the Arms Control Association. One would think that an American organization so named and devoted to organizing against the perils of nuclear proliferation wouldn't grasp on to every ambiguity to build the case for Iraq's atomic innocence. For, as the *Washington Post* wrote, on the massive evidence "there can be no doubt that Iraq was after a bomb." But those who act with the holy pretense in politics, like the arms controllers, are not beyond pettifogging to shore up their usefulness. What Israel has done is shatter the logic of the world they inhabit—inspections that don't reveal, monitors that don't watch, safeguards that don't protect, international agencies dominated by dogma and bloc. The ACA charged in a cascade of sanctimony that the Israeli strike "will generate instabilities which are the root cause of nations going for nuclear weapons." To a similar assertion, the *Post* replied that "this is a fairy tale. . . . This is like saying nuclear war threatens detente. The raid did not weaken the system. It exposed its weaknesses." The truth is that Israel understands what survival requires in a world ordered in part by predators, in part by those whose scruples have decayed into cowardice. The most dangerous folk around may be those who believe in the well-intentioned and high-sounding but fundamentally implausible "frivolities" (an ACA favorite is Nuclear Suppliers' Guidelines) with which, as Elie Kedourie wrote in a not very different context, political leaders "distract their peoples on the way to catastrophe."

M.P.

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